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PREFACES,
BIOGRAPHICAL
AND
CRITICAL,
TO THE
WORKS
OF THE
ENGLISH POETS.
BY SAMUEL JOHNSON.

VOLUME THE EIGHTH.

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M DCC LXXXI.

BRITISH MUSEUM

PREFACES

TO

SWIFT, GAY,

BROOME, PITT,

PARNELL, A. PHILIPS,

AND

WATTS.

BRITISH MUSEUM

SWIFT.

AN Account of Dr. Swift has been already collected, with great diligence and acuteneſs, by Dr. Hawkeſworth, according to a ſcheme which I laid before him in the intimacy of our friendſhip. I cannot therefore be expected to ſay much of a life, concerning which I had long ſince communicated my thoughts to a man capable of dignifying his narration with ſo much elegance of language and force of ſentiment.

A JO-

JONATHAN SWIFT was, according to an account ſaid to be written by himſelf, the ſon of Jonathan Swift, an attorney, and was born at Dublin on St. Andrew's day, 1667: according to his own report, as delivered by Pope to Spence, he was born at Leiceſter, the ſon of a clergyman, who was miniſter of a pariſh in Herefordſhire *. During his life the place of his birth was undetermined. He was contented to be called an Iriſhman by the Iriſh; but would occaſionally call himſelf an Engliſhman. The queſtion may, without much regret, be left in the obſcurity in which he delighted to involve it.

* Spence's Anecdotes, vol. II. p. 273.

What-

Whatever was his birth, his education was Iriſh. He was ſent at the age of ſix to the ſchool at Kilkenny, and in his fifteenth year (1682) was admitted into the Univerſity of Dublin.

In his academical ſtudies he was either not diligent or not happy. It muſt diſappoint every reader's expectation, that, when at the uſual time he claimed the Bachelorſhip of Arts, he was found by the examiners too conſpicuouſly deficient for regular admiſſion, and obtained his degree at laſt by *ſpecial favour*; a term uſed in that Univerſity to denote want of merit.

Of this diſgrace it may be eaſily ſuppoſed that he was much aſhamed, and ſhame had its proper effect in producing

reformation. He reſolved from that time to ſtudy eight hours a-day, and continued his induſtry for ſeven years, with what improvement is ſufficiently known. This part of his ſtory well deſerves to be remembered; it may afford uſeful admonition and powerful encouragement to many men, whoſe abilities have been made for a time uſeleſs by their paſſions or pleaſures, and who, having loſt one part of life in idleneſs, are tempted to throw away the remainder in deſpair.

In this courſe of daily application he continued three years longer at Dublin; and in this time, if the obſervation and memory of an old companion may be truſted,

truſted, he drew the firſt ſketch of his *Tale of a Tub*.

When he was about one and twenty (1688), being by the death of Godwin Swift his uncle, who had ſupported him, left without ſubſiſtence, he went to conſult his mother, who then lived at Leiceſter, about the future courſe of his life, and by her direction ſolicited the advice and patronage of Sir William Temple, who had married one of Mrs. Swift's relations, and whoſe father Sir John Temple, Maſter of the Rolls in Ireland, had lived in great familiarity of friendſhip with Godwin Swift, by whom Jonathan had been to that time maintained.

Temple received with ſufficient kindneſs the nephew of his father's friend, with whom he was, when they converſed together, ſo much pleaſed, that he detained him two years in his houſe. Here he became known to King William, who ſometimes viſited Temple when he was diſabled by the gout, and, being attended by Swift in the garden, ſhewed him how to cut aſparagus in the Dutch way.

King William's notions were all military; and he expreſſed his kindneſs to Swift by offering to make him a captain of horſe.

When Temple removed to Moor-park, he took Swift with him; and when he was conſulted by the Earl of Portland about

about the expedience of complying with a bill then depending for making Parliaments triennial, againſt which King William was ſtrongly prejudiced, after having in vain tried to ſhew the Earl that the propoſal involved nothing dangerous to royal power, he ſent Swift for the ſame purpoſe to the King. Swift, who probably was proud of his employment, and went with all the confidence of a young man, found his arguments, and his art of diſplaying them, made totally ineffectual by the predetermination of the King; and uſed to mention this diſappointment as his firſt antidote againſt vanity.

Before he left Ireland he contracted a diſorder, as he thought, by eating too

much fruit. The original of diſeaſes is commonly obſcure. Almoſt every boy eats as much fruit as he can get, without any great inconvenience. The diſeaſe of Swift was giddineſs with deafneſs, which attacked him from time to time, began very early, purſued him through life, and at laſt ſent him to the grave deprived of reaſon.

Being much oppreſſed at Moor-park by this grievous malady, he was adviſed to try his native air, and went to Ireland; but, finding no benefit, returned to Sir William, at whoſe houſe he continued his ſtudies, and is known to have read, among other books, *Cyprian* and *Irenæus*. He thought exerciſe of great neceſſity, and uſed to run half a

mile up and down a hill every two hours.

It is eaſy to imagine that the mode in which his firſt degree was conferred left him no great fondneſs for the Univerſity of Dublin, and therefore he reſolved to become a Maſter of Arts at Oxford. In the teſtimonial which he produced, the words of diſgrace were omitted, and he took his Maſter's degree (July 5, 1692) with ſuch reception and regard as fully contented him.

While he lived with Temple, he uſed to pay his mother at Leiceſter an yearly viſit. He travelled on foot, unleſs ſome violence of weather drove him into a waggon, and at night he would go to a penny lodging, where he purchaſed clean

clean ſheets for ſix-pence. This practice Lord Orrery imputes to his innate love of groſſneſs and vulgarity: ſome may aſcribe it to his deſire of ſurveying human life through all its varieties; and others, perhaps with equal probability, to a paſſion which ſeems to have been deep fixed in his heart, the love of a ſhilling.

In time he began to think that his attendance at Moor-park deſerved ſome other recompenſe than the pleaſure, however mingled with improvement, of Temple's converſation; and grew ſo impatient, that (1694) he went away in diſcontent.

Temple, conſcious of having given reaſon for complaint, is ſaid to have made him Deputy Maſter of the Rolls in Ireland;

land; which, according to his kinſman's account, was an office which he knew him not able to diſcharge. Swift therefore reſolved to enter into the Church, in which he had at firſt no higher hopes than of the chaplainſhip to the Factory at Liſbon; but being recommended to Lord Capel, he obtained the prebend of *Kilroot* in *Connor*, of about a hundred pounds a year.

But the infirmities of Temple made a companion like Swift ſo neceſſary, that he invited him back, with a promiſe to procure him Engliſh preferment, in exchange for the prebend which he deſired him to reſign. With this requeſt Swift quickly complied, having perhaps equally repented their ſeparation, and they lived

lived on together with mutual ſatisfaction; and, in the four years that paſſed between his return and Temple's death, it is probable that he wrote the *Tale of a Tub* and the *Battle of the Books*.

Swift began early to think, or to hope, that he was a poet, and wrote Pindarick Odes to Temple, to the King, and to the Athenian Society, a knot of obſcure men, who publiſhed a periodical pamphlet of anſwers to queſtions, ſent, or ſuppoſed to be ſent, by Letters. I have been told that Dryden, having peruſed theſe verſes, ſaid, "Couſin Swift, you will "never be a poet;" and that this denunciation was the motive of Swift's perpetual malevolence to Dryden.

In

In 1699 Temple died, and left a legacy with his manuſcripts to Swift, for whom he had obtained, from King William, a promiſe of the firſt prebend that ſhould be vacant at Weſtminſter or Canterbury.

That this promiſe might not be forgotten, Swift dedicated to the King the poſthumous works with which he was intruſted; but neither the dedication, nor tenderneſs for the man whom he once had treated with confidence and fondneſs, revived in King William the remembrance of his promiſe. Swift awhile attended the Court; but ſoon found his ſolicitations hopeleſs.

He was then invited by the Earl of Berkley to accompany him into Ireland, as

as his private ſecretary; but after having done the buſineſs till their arrival at Dublin, he then found that one *Buſh* had perſuaded the Earl that a clergyman was not a proper ſecretary, and had obtained the office for himſelf. In a man like Swift ſuch circumvention and inconſtancy muſt have excited violent indignation.

But he had yet more to ſuffer. Lord Berkley had the diſpoſal of the deanery of Derry, and Swift expected to obtain it; but by the ſecretary's influence, ſuppoſed to have been ſecured by a bribe, it was beſtowed on ſomebody elſe; and Swift was diſmiſſed with the livings of *Laracor* and *Rathbeggin* in the dioceſe of Meath,

Meath, which together did not equal half the value of the deanery.

At Laracor he increaſed the parochial duty by reading prayers on Wedneſdays and Fridays, and performed all the offices of his profeſſion with great decency and exactneſs.

Soon after his ſettlement at Laracor, he invited to Ireland the unfortunate Stella, a young woman whoſe name was Johnſon, the daughter of the ſteward of Sir William Temple, who, in conſideration of her father's virtues, left her a thouſand pounds. With her came Mrs. Dingley, whoſe whole fortune was twenty-ſeven pounds a year for her life. With theſe Ladies he paſſed his hours of relaxation, and to them he opened

his bosom; but they never resided in the same house, nor did he see either without a witness. They lived at the Parsonage, when Swift was away; and when he returned, removed to a lodging, or to the house of a neighbouring clergyman.

Swift was not one of those minds which amaze the world with early pregnancy: his first work, except his few poetical Essays, was the *Dissentions in Athens and Rome*, published (1701) in his thirty-fourth year. After its appearance, paying a visit to some bishop, he heard mention made of the new pamphlet that Burnet had written, replete with political knowledge. When he seemed to doubt Burnet's right to the work, he was told by the Bishop, that he

he was *a young man*; and, ſtill perſiſting to doubt, that he was *a very poſitive young man*.

Three years afterward (1704) was publiſhed *The Tale of a Tub*: of this book charity may be perſuaded to think that it might be written by a man of a peculiar character, without ill intention, but it is certainly of dangerous example. That Swift was its author, though it be univerſally believed, was never owned by himſelf, nor very well proved by any evidence; but no other claimant can be produced, and he did not deny it when Archbiſhop Sharpe and the Ducheſs of Somerſet, by ſhewing it to the Queen, debarred him from a biſhoprick.

When this wild work first raised the attention of the publick, Sacheverell, meeting Smalridge, tried to flatter him, by seeming to think him the author; but Smalridge answered with indignation, "Not all that you and I have in the "world, nor all that ever we shall have, "should hire me to write the *Tale of "a Tub.*"

The digressions relating to Wotton and Bentley must be confessed to discover want of knowledge, or want of integrity; he did not understand the two controversies, or he willingly misrepresented them. But Wit can stand its ground against Truth only a little while. The honours due to learning have been justly distributed by the decision of posterity.

The

The Battle of the Books is ſo like the *Combat des Livres*, which the ſame queſtion concerning the Ancients and Moderns had produced in France, that the improbability of ſuch a coincidence of thoughts without communication is not, in my opinion, balanced by the anonymous proteſtation prefixed, in which all knowledge of the French book is peremptorily diſowned.

For ſome time after Swift was probably employed in ſolitary ſtudy, gaining the qualifications requiſite for future eminence. How often he viſited England, and with what diligence he attended his pariſhes, I know not. It was not till about four years afterwards

that he became a profeſſed author, and then one year (1708) produced *The Sentiments of a Church-of-England Man*; the ridicule of Aſtrology, under the name of *Bickerſtaff*; the *Argument againſt aboliſhing Chriſtianity*; and the defence of the *Sacramental Teſt*.

The Sentiments of a Church-of-England Man is written with great coolneſs, moderation, eaſe, and perſpicuity. The *Argument againſt aboliſhing Chriſtianity* is a very happy and judicious irony. One paſſage in it deſerves to be ſelected.

"If Chriſtianity were once aboliſhed, "how could the free-thinkers, the ſtrong "reaſoners, and the men of profound "learning, be able to find another ſub-

"ject

" ject ſo calculated, in all points, where-
" on to diſplay their abilities? What
" wonderful productions of wit ſhould
" we be deprived of from thoſe, whoſe
" genius, by continual practice, hath
" been wholly turned upon raillery and
" invectives againſt religion, and would
" therefore never be able to ſhine, or
" diſtinguiſh themſelves, upon any other
" ſubject? We are daily complaining
" of the great decline of wit among us,
" and would take away the greateſt,
" perhaps the only, topick we have left.
" Who would ever have ſuſpected Aſgill
" for a wit, or Toland for a philoſo-
" pher, if the inexhauſtible ſtock of
" Chriſtianity had not been at hand to
" provide them with materials? What

"other ſubject, through all art or na-
"ture, could have produced Tindal for
"a profound author, or furniſhed him
"with readers? It is the wiſe choice
"of the ſubject that alone adorns and
"diſtinguiſhes the writer. For had an
"hundred ſuch pens as theſe been em-
"ployed on the ſide of religion, they
"would have immediately ſunk into
"ſilence and oblivion."

The reaſonableneſs of a *Teſt* is not hard to be proved; but perhaps it muſt be allowed that the proper teſt has not been choſen.

The attention paid to the papers publiſhed under the name of *Bickerſtaff*, induced Steele, when he projected the *Tatler*, to aſſume an appellation which had

had already gained poſſeſſion of the reader's notice.

In the year following he wrote a *Project for the Advancement of Religion*, addreſſed to Lady Berkley; by whoſe kindneſs it is not unlikely that he was advanced to his benefices. To this project, which is formed with great purity of intention, and diſplayed with ſpritelineſs and elegance, it can only be objected, that, like many projects, it is, if not generally impracticable, yet evidently hopeleſs, as it ſuppoſes more zeal, concord, and perſeverance, than a view of mankind gives reaſon for expecting.

He wrote likewiſe this year a *Vindication of Bickerſtaff*; and an explanation of an *Ancient Prophecy*, which, though not

completed in all its parts, cannot be read without amazement.

Soon after began the buſy and important part of Swift's life. He was employed (1710) by the Primate of Ireland to ſolicit the Queen for a remiſſion of the Firſt Fruits and Twentieth Parts to the Iriſh Clergy. With this purpoſe he had recourſe to Mr. Harley, to whom he was mentioned as a man neglected and oppreſſed by the laſt miniſtry, becauſe he had refuſed to co-operate with ſome of their ſchemes. What he had refuſed, has never been told; what he had ſuffered was, I ſuppoſe, the excluſion from a biſhoprick by the remonſtrances of Sharpe, whom he deſcribes as *the harmleſs tool of others hate*, and

whom he repreſents as afterwards *ſuing for pardon.*

Harley's deſigns and ſituation were ſuch as made him glad of an auxiliary ſo well qualified for his ſervice; he therefore ſoon admitted him to familiarity, whether ever to confidence ſome have made a doubt; but it would have been difficult to excite his zeal without perſuading him that he was truſted, and not very eaſy to delude him by falſe perſuaſions.

He was certainly admitted to thoſe meetings in which the firſt hints and original plan of action are ſuppoſed to have been formed; and was one of the ſixteen Miniſters, or agents of the Miniſtry, who met weekly at each other's houſes,

houſes, and were united by the name of *Brother*.

Being not immediately conſidered as an obdurate Tory, he converſed indiſcriminately with all the wits, and was yet the friend of Steele; who, in the *Tatler*, which began in 1710, confeſſes the advantages of his converſation, and mentions ſomething contributed by him to his paper. But he was now immerging into political controverſy; for the ſame year produced the *Examiner*, of which Swift wrote thirty-three papers. In argument he may be allowed to have the advantage; for where a wide ſyſtem of conduct, and the whole of a publick character, is laid open to enquiry, the accuſer having the choice of facts, muſt be very unſkilful

if he does not prevail; but with regard to wit, I am afraid none of Swift's papers will be found equal to thoſe by which Addiſon oppoſed him.

Early in the next year he publiſhed a *Propoſal for correcting, improving, and aſcertaining the Engliſh Tongue*, in a Letter to the Earl of Oxford; written without much knowledge of the general nature of language, and without any accurate enquiry into the hiſtory of other tongues. The certainty and ſtability which, contrary to all experience, he thinks attainable, he propoſes to ſecure by inſtituting an academy; the decrees of which every man would have been willing, and many would have been proud to diſobey, and which, being renewed

newed by ſucceſſive elections, would in a ſhort time have differed from itſelf.

He wrote the ſame year a *Letter to the October Club*, a number of Tory Gentlemen ſent from the country to Parliament, who formed themſelves into a club, to the number of about a hundred, and met to animate the zeal and raiſe the expectations of each other. They thought, with great reaſon, that the Miniſters were loſing opportunities; that ſufficient uſe was not made of the general ardour of the nation; they called loudly for more changes, and ſtronger efforts; and demanded the puniſhment of part, and the diſmiſſion of the reſt, of thoſe whom they conſidered as publick robbers.

Their

Their eagerneſs was not gratified by the Queen, or by Harley. The Queen was probably ſlow becauſe ſhe was afraid, and Harley was ſlow becauſe he was doubtful; he was a Tory only by neceſſity, or for convenience; and when he had power in his hands, had no ſettled purpoſe for which he ſhould employ it; forced to gratify to a certain degree the Tories who ſupported him, but unwilling to make his reconcilement to the Whigs utterly deſperate, he correſponded at once with the two expectants of the Crown, and kept, as has been obſerved, the ſucceſſion undetermined. Not knowing what to do, he did nothing; and with the fate of a double-dealer, at laſt he loſt his power, but kept his enemies.

Swift ſeems to have concurred in opinion with the *October Club*; but it was not in his power to quicken the tardineſs of Harley, whom he ſtimulated as much as he could, but with little effect. He that knows not whither to go, is in no haſte to move. Harley, who was perhaps not quick by nature, became yet more ſlow by irreſolution; and was content to hear that dilatorineſs lamented as natural, which he applauded in himſelf as politick.

Without the Tories, however, nothing could be done; and as they were not to be gratified, they muſt be appeaſed; and the conduct of the Miniſter, if it could not be vindicated, was to be plauſibly excuſed.

Swift

Swift now attained the zenith of his political importance: he publiſhed (1712) the *Conduct of the Allies*, ten days before the Parliament aſſembled. The purpoſe was to perſuade the nation to a peace, and never had any writer more ſucceſs. The people, who had been amuſed with bonfires and triumphal proceſſions, and looked with idolatry on the General and his friends, who, as they thought, had made England the arbitreſs of nations, were confounded between ſhame and rage, when they found that *mines had been exhauſted, and millions deſtroyed*, to ſecure the Dutch or aggrandiſe the Emperor, without any advantage to ourſelves; that we had been bribing our neighbours to fight their

their own quarrel; and that amongſt our enemies we might number our allies.

That is now no longer doubted, of which the nation was then firſt informed, that the war was unneceſſarily protracted to fill the pockets of Marlborough; and that it would have been continued without end, if he could have continued his annual plunder. But Swift, I ſuppoſe, did not yet know what he has ſince written, that a commiſſion was drawn which would have appointed him General for life, had it not become ineffectual by the reſolution of Lord Cowper, who refuſed the ſeal.

Whatever is received, ſay the ſchools, *is received in proportion to the recipient.* The power of a political treatiſe depends

ponds much upon the diſpoſition of the people; the nation was then combuſtible, and a ſpark ſet it on fire. It is boaſted, that between November and January eleven thouſand were ſold; a great number at that time, when we were not yet a nation of readers. To its propagation certainly no agency of power or influence was wanting. It furniſhed arguments for converſation, ſpeeches for debate, and materials for parliamentary reſolutions.

Yet, ſurely, whoever ſurveys this wonder-working pamphlet with cool peruſal, will confeſs that its efficacy was ſupplied by the paſſions of its readers; that it operates by the mere weight of

facts, with very little assistance from the hand that produced them.

This year (1712) he published his *Reflections on the Barrier Treaty*, which carries on the design of his *Conduct of the Allies*, and shews how little regard in that negotiation had been shewn to the interest of England, and how much of the conquered country had been demanded by the Dutch.

This was followed by *Remarks on the Bishop of Sarum's Introduction to his third Volume of the History of the Reformation*; a pamphlet which Burnet published as an alarm, to warn the nation of the approach of Popery. Swift, who seems to have disliked the Bishop with some-

thing

thing more than political averſion, treats him like one whom he is glad of an opportunity to inſult.

Swift, being now the declared favourite and ſuppoſed confidant of the Tory Miniſtry, was treated by all that depended on the Court with the reſpect which dependents know how to pay. He ſoon began to feel part of the miſery of greatneſs; he that could ſay he knew him, conſidered himſelf as having fortune in his power. Commiſſions, ſolicitations, remonſtrances, crouded about him; he was expected to do every man's buſineſs, to procure employment for one, and to retain it for another. In aſſiſting thoſe who addreſſed him, he repreſents himſelf as ſufficiently diligent; and deſires

to have others believe, what he probably believed himſelf, that by his interpoſition many Whigs of merit, and among them Addiſon and Congreve, were continued in their places. But every man of known influence has ſo many petitions which he cannot grant, that he muſt neceſſarily offend more than he gratifies, as the preference given to one affords all the reſt a reaſon for complaint. *When I give away a place*, ſaid Lewis XIV. *I make an hundred diſcontented, and one ungrateful.*

Much has been ſaid of the equality and independence which he preſerved in his converſation with the Miniſters, of the frankneſs of his remonſtrances, and the familiarity of his friendſhip.

In

In accounts of this kind a few ſingle incidents are ſet againſt the general tenour of behaviour. No man, however, can pay a more ſervile tribute to the Great, than by ſuffering his liberty in their preſence to aggrandize him in his own eſteem. Between different ranks of the community there is neceſſarily ſome diſtance: he who is called by his ſuperior to paſs the interval, may very properly accept the invitation; but petulance and obtruſion are rarely produced by magnanimity; nor have often any nobler cauſe than the pride of importance, and the malice of inferiority. He who knows himſelf neceſſary may ſet, while that neceſſity laſts, a high value upon himſelf; as, in a lower con-

dition, a ſervant eminently ſkilful may be ſaucy; but he is ſaucy only becauſe he is ſervile. Swift appears to have preſerved the kindneſs of thoſe that wanted him no longer; and therefore it muſt be allowed, that the childiſh freedom, to which he ſeems enough inclined, was overpowered by his better qualities.

His diſintereſtedneſs has been likewiſe mentioned; a ſtrain of heroiſm, which would have been in his condition romantick and ſuperfluous. Eccleſiaſtical benefices, when they become vacant, muſt be given away; and the friends of Power may, if there be no inherent diſqualification, reaſonably expect them. Swift accepted (1713) the deanery of St.

St. Patrick, the beſt preferment that his friends could venture to give him. That Miniſtry was in a great degree ſupported by the Clergy, who were not yet reconciled to the author of the *Tale of a Tub*, and would not without much diſcontent and indignation have borne to ſee him inſtalled in an Engliſh Cathedral.

He refuſed, indeed, fifty pounds from Lord Oxford; but he accepted afterwards a draught of a thouſand upon the Exchequer, which was intercepted by the Queen's death, and which he reſigned, as he ſays himſelf, *multa gemens, with many a groan.*

In the midſt of his power and his politicks, he kept a journal of his viſits, his walks, his interviews with Miniſters,

and quarrels with his ſervant, and tranſmitted it to Mrs. Johnſon and Mrs. Dingley, to whom he knew that whatever befel him was intereſting, and to whom no accounts could be too minute. Whether theſe diurnal trifles were properly expoſed to eyes which had never received any pleaſure from the preſence of the Dean, may be reaſonably doubted: they have, however, ſome odd attraction; the reader, finding frequent mention of names which he has been uſed to conſider as important, goes on in hope of information; and, as there is nothing to fatigue attention, if he is diſappointed he can hardly complain. It is eaſy to perceive, from every page, that though ambition preſſed Swift into a life

of

of buſtle, the wiſh was always returning for a life of eaſe.

He went to take poſſeſſion of his deanery, as ſoon as he had obtained it; but he was not ſuffered to ſtay in Ireland more than a fortnight before he was recalled to England, that he might reconcile Lord Oxford and Lord Bolingbroke, who began to look on one another with malevolence, which every day increaſed, and which Bolingbroke appeared to retain in his laſt years.

Swift contrived an interview, from which they both departed diſcontented: he procured a ſecond, which only convinced him that the feud was irreconcilable; he told them his opinion, that all was loſt. This denunciation was contradicted

tradicted by Oxford, but Bolingbroke whiſpered that he was right.

Before this violent diſſention had ſhattered the Miniſtry, Swift had publiſhed, in the beginning of the year (1714), *The Publick Spirit of the Whigs*, in anſwer to *The Criſis*, a pamphlet for which *Steele* was expelled from the Houſe of Commons. Swift was now ſo far alienated from *Steele* as to think him no longer entitled to decency, and therefore treats him ſometimes with contempt, and ſometimes with abhorrence.

In this pamphlet the Scots were mentioned in terms ſo provoking to that irritable nation, that, reſolving *not to be offended with impunity*, the Scotch Lords in a body demanded an audience of the

Queen, and ſolicited reparation. A proclamation was iſſued, in which three hundred pounds was offered for diſcovery of the author. From this ſtorm he was, as he relates, *ſecured by a ſleight*; of what kind, or by whoſe prudence, is not known; and ſuch was the increaſe of his reputation, that the Scottiſh *Nation applied again that he would be their friend*.

He was become ſo formidable to the Whigs, that his familiarity with the Miniſters was clamoured at in Parliament, particularly by two men, afterwards of great note, *Aiſlabie* and *Walpole*.

But, by the diſunion of his great friends, his importance and his deſigns were now at an end; and ſeeing his ſervices

vices at laſt uſeleſs, he retired about June (1714) into Berkſhire, where, in the houſe of a friend, he wrote what was then ſuppreſſed, but has ſince appeared under the title of *Free Thoughts on the preſent State of Affairs.*

While he was waiting in this retirement for events which time or chance might bring to paſs, the death of the Queen broke down at once the whole ſyſtem of Tory Politicks; and nothing remained but to withdraw from the implacability of triumphant Whiggiſm, and ſhelter himſelf in unenvied obſcurity.

The accounts of his reception in Ireland, given by Lord Orrery and Dr. Delany, are ſo different, that the credit of the

the writers, both undoubtedly veracious, cannot be ſaved but by ſuppoſing, what I think is true, that they ſpeak of different times. When Delany ſays that he was received with kindneſs and reſpect, he means for the firſt fortnight, when he came to take legal poſſeſſion; and when Lord Orrery tells that he was pelted by the populace, he is to be underſtood of the time when, after the Queen's death, he became a ſettled reſident.

The Archbiſhop of Dublin gave him at firſt ſome diſturbance in the exerciſe of his juriſdiction; but it was ſoon diſcovered, that between prudence and integrity he was ſeldom in the wrong;

and that, when he was right, his ſpirit did not eaſily yield to oppoſition.

Having ſo lately quitted the tumults of a party and the intrigues of a court, they ſtill kept his thoughts in agitation, as the ſea fluctuates a while when the ſtorm has ceaſed. He therefore filled his hours with ſome hiſtorical attempts, relating to the *Change of the Miniſters* and *the Conduct of the Miniſtry*. He likewiſe is ſaid to have written a *Hiſtory of the Four laſt Years of Queen Anne*, which he began in her life-time, and afterwards laboured with great attention, but never publiſhed. It was after his death in the hands of Lord Orrery and Dr. King. A book under that title was publiſhed, with Swift's name, by Dr. Lucas;

Lucas; of which I can only ſay, that it ſeemed by no means to correſpond with the notions that I had formed of it, from a converſation which I once heard between the Earl of Orrery and old Mr. Lewis.

Swift now, much againſt his will, commenced Iriſhman for life, and was to contrive how he might be beſt accommodated in a country where he conſidered himſelf as in a ſtate of exile. It ſeems that his firſt recourſe was to piety. The thoughts of death ruſhed upon him, at this time, with ſuch inceſſant importunity, that they took poſſeſſion of his mind when he firſt waked for many years together.

He

He opened his houſe by a publick table two days a week, and found his entertainments gradually frequented by more and more viſitants of learning among the men, and of elegance among the women. Mrs. Johnſon had left the country, and lived in lodgings not far from the deanery. On his publick days ſhe regulated the table, but always appeared at it as a mere gueſt, like other Ladies.

On other days he often dined, at a ſtated price, with Mr. Worral, a clergyman of his cathedral, whoſe houſe was recommended by the peculiar neatneſs and pleaſantry of his wife. To this frugal mode of living, he was firſt diſpoſed by care to pay ſome debts which

which he had contracted, and he continued it for the pleaſure of accumulating money. His avarice, however, was not ſuffered to obſtruct the claims of his dignity; he was ſerved in plate, and uſed to ſay that he was the pooreſt gentleman in Ireland that eat upon plate, and the richeſt that lived without a coach.

How he ſpent the reſt of his time, and how he employed his hours of ſtudy, has been enquired with hopeleſs curioſity. For who can give an account of another's ſtudies? Swift was not likely to admit any to his privacies, or to impart a minute account of his buſineſs or his leiſure.

Soon after (1716), in his forty-ninth year, he was privately married to Mrs. Johnſon by Dr. Aſhe, Biſhop of Clogher, as Dr. Madden told me, in the garden. The marriage made no change in their mode of life; they lived in different houſes, as before; nor did ſhe ever lodge in the deanery but when Swift was ſeized with a fit of giddineſs. "It would "be difficult," ſays Lord Orrery, "to "prove that they were ever afterwards "together without a third perſon."

The Dean of St. Patrick's lived in a private manner, known and regarded only by his friends, till, about the year 1720, he, by a pamphlet, recommended to the Iriſh the uſe, and conſequently the improvement, of their manufacture.

For

For a man to uſe the productions of his own labour is ſurely a natural right, and to like beſt what he makes himſelf is a natural paſſion. But to excite this paſſion, and enforce this right, appeared ſo criminal to thoſe who had an intereſt in the Engliſh trade, that the printer was impriſoned; and, as Hawkeſworth juſtly obſerves, the attention of the publick being by this outrageous reſentment turned upon the propoſal, the author was by conſequence made popular.

In 1723 died Mrs. Van Homrigh, a woman made unhappy by her admiration of wit, and ignominiouſly diſtinguiſhed by the name of *Vaneſſa*, whoſe conduct has been already ſufficiently diſcuſſed, and whoſe hiſtory is too well

known to be minutely repeated. She was a young woman fond of literature, whom *Decanus* the *Dean*, called *Cadenus* by tranſpoſition of the letters, took pleaſure in directing and inſtructing; till, from being proud of his praiſe, ſhe grew fond of his perſon. Swift was then about forty-ſeven, at an age when vanity is ſtrongly excited by the amorous attention of a young woman. If it be ſaid that Swift ſhould have checked a paſſion which he never meant to gratify, recourſe muſt be had to that extenuation which he ſo much deſpiſed, *men are but men*: perhaps however he did not at firſt know his own mind, and, as he repreſents himſelf, was undetermined. For his admiſſion of her courtſhip, and his indul-

indulgence of her hopes after his marriage to Stella, no other honeſt plea can be found, than that he delayed a diſagreeable diſcovery from time to time, dreading the immediate burſt of diſtreſs, and watching for a favourable moment. She thought herſelf neglected, and died of diſappointment; having ordered by her will the poem to be publiſhed, in which *Cadenus* had proclaimed her excellence, and confeſſed his love. The effect of the publication is thus related by Delany.

"I have good reaſon to believe, that "they both were greatly ſhocked and "diſtreſſed (though it may be differently) upon this occaſion. The Dean "made a tour to the South of Ireland,

" for about two months, at this time, to " diſſipate his thoughts, and give place " to obloquy. And Stella retired (upon " the earneſt invitation of the owner) " to the houſe of a chearful, generous, " good-natured friend of the Dean's, " whom ſhe alſo much loved and ho- " noured. There my informer often ſaw " her; and, I have reaſon to believe, " uſed his utmoſt endeavours to relieve, " ſupport, and amuſe her, in this ſad " ſituation.

" One little incident he told me of, " on that occaſion, I think I ſhall never " forget. As her friend was an hoſpi- " table, open-hearted man, well-beloved " and largely acquainted, it happened " one day that ſome gentlemen dropt in

"to dinner, who were ſtrangers to Stel-
"la's ſituation; and as the poem of
"*Cadenus and Vaneſſa* was then the ge-
"neral topic of converſation, one of
"them ſaid, 'Surely that Vaneſſa muſt
"be an extraordinary woman, that could
"inſpire the Dean to write ſo finely
"upon her.' Mrs. Johnſon ſmiled, and
"anſwered, "that ſhe thought that
"point not quite ſo clear; for it was
"well known the Dean could write
"finely upon a broomſtick."

The great acquiſition of eſteem and influence was made by the *Draper's Letters* in 1724. One Wood of Wolverhampton in Staffordſhire, a man enterpriſing and rapacious, had, as is ſaid, by a preſent to the Dutcheſs of Munſter,

obtained a patent empowering him to coin one hundred and eighty thouſand pounds of half-pence and farthings for the kingdom of Ireland, in which there was a very inconvenient and embarraſſing ſcarcity of copper coin; ſo that it was poſſible to run in debt upon the credit of a piece of money. The cook or keeper of an alehouſe could not refuſe to ſupply a man that had ſilver in his hand, and the buyer would not leave his money without change.

The project was therefore plauſible. The ſcarcity, which was already great, Wood took care to make greater, by agents who gathered up the old half-pence; and was about to turn his braſs into gold, by pouring his treaſures of his

his new mint upon Ireland; when Swift, finding that the metal was debaſed to an enormous degree, wrote Letters, under the name of *M. B. Drapier*, to ſhew the folly of receiving, and the miſchief that muſt enſue, by giving gold and ſilver for coin worth perhaps not a third part of its nominal value.

The nation was alarmed; the new coin was univerſally refuſed: but the governors of Ireland conſidered reſiſtance to the King's patent as highly criminal; and one Whitſhed, then Chief Juſtice, who had tried the printer of the former pamphlet, and ſent out the Jury nine times, till by clamour and menaces they were frighted into a ſpecial verdict, now preſented the *Drapier*, but could

could not prevail on the Grand Jury to find the bill.

Lord Carteret and the Privy Council published a proclamation, offering three hundred pounds for discovering the author of the Fourth Letter. Swift had concealed himself from his printers, and trusted only his butler, who transcribed the paper. The man, immediately after the appearance of the proclamation, strolled from the house, and staid out all night and part of the next day. There was reason enough to fear that he had betrayed his master for the reward; but he came home, and the Dean ordered him to put off his livery, and leave the house; "for," says he, "I know that "my life is in your power, and I will "not

"not bear, out of fear, either your inſo-
"lence or negligence." The man ex-
cuſed his fault with great ſubmiſſion, and begged that he might be con-
fined in the houſe while it was in his power to endanger his maſter; but the Dean reſolutely turned him out, without taking farther notice of him, till the term of information had expired, and then received him again. Soon after-
wards he ordered him and the reſt of the ſervants into his preſence, without telling his intentions, and bade them take notice that their fellow-ſervant was no longer Robert the butler; but that his integrity had made him Mr. Blake-
ney, verger of St. Patrick's; an officer whoſe income was between thirty and forty

forty pounds a year, but he ſtill continued for ſome years to ſerve his old maſter as his butler.

Swift was known from this time by the appellation of *The Dean*. He was honoured by the populace as the champion, patron, and inſtructer of Ireland; and gained ſuch power as, conſidered both in its extent and duration, ſcarcely any man has ever enjoyed without greater wealth or higher ſtation.

He was from this important year the oracle of the traders, and the idol of the rabble, and by conſequence was feared and courted by all to whom the kindneſs of the traders or the populace was neceſſary. The *Drapier* was a ſign; the *Drapier* was a health; and which way

way ſoever the eye or the ear was turned, ſome tokens were found of the nation's gratitude to the *Drapier*.

The benefit was indeed great; he had reſcued Ireland from a very oppreſſive and predatory invaſion; and the popularity which he had gained he was diligent to keep, by appearing forward and zealous on every occaſion where the publick intereſt was ſuppoſed to be involved. Nor did he much ſcruple to boaſt his influence; for when, upon ſome attempts to regulate the coin, Archbiſhop Boulter, then one of the Juſtices, accuſed him of exaſperating the people, he exculpated himſelf by ſaying, "If I had lifted up my finger, "they would have torn you to pieces."

But

But the pleaſure of popularity was ſoon interrupted by domeſtick miſery. Mrs. Johnſon, whoſe converſation was to him the great ſoftener of the ills of life, began in the year of the Drapier's triumph to decline; and two years afterwards was ſo waſted with ſickneſs, that her recovery was conſidered as hopeleſs.

Swift was then in England, and had been invited by Lord Bolingbroke to paſs the winter with him in France; but this call of calamity haſtened him to Ireland, where perhaps his preſence contributed to reſtore her to imperfect and tottering health.

He was now ſo much at eaſe, that (1727) he returned to England; where he collected three volumes of Miſcella-

nies

nies in conjunction with Pope, who prefixed a querulous and apologetical Preface.

This important year ſent likewiſe into the world *Gulliver's Travels*, a production ſo new and ſtrange, that it filled the reader with a mingled emotion of merriment and amazement. It was received with ſuch avidity, that the price of the firſt edition was raiſed before a ſecond could be made; it was read by the high and the low, the learned and illiterate. Criticiſm was for a while loſt in wonder; no rules of judgement were applied to a book written in open defiance of truth and regularity. But when diſtinctions came to be made, the part which gave leaſt pleaſure was that which deſcribes the

the *Flying Iſland*, and that which gave moſt diſguſt muſt be the hiſtory of the *Houyhnhnms*.

While Swift was enjoying the reputation of his new work, the news of the King's death arrived; and he kiſſed the hands of the new King and Queen three days after their acceſſion.

By the Queen, when ſhe was Princeſs, he had been treated with ſome diſtinction, and was well received by her in her exaltation; but whether ſhe gave hopes which ſhe never took care to ſatisfy, or he formed expectations which ſhe never meant to raiſe, the event was, that he always afterwards thought on her with malevolence, and particularly charged her with breaking her promiſe

of

of ſome medals which ſhe engaged to ſend him.

I know not whether ſhe had not, in her turn, ſome reaſon for complaint. A Letter was ſent her, not ſo much entreating as requiring her patronage of Mrs. Barber, an ingenious Iriſhwoman, who was then begging ſubſcriptions for her Poems. To this Letter was ſubſcribed the name of *Swift*, and it has all the appearances of his diction and ſentiments; but it was not written in his hand, and had ſome little improprieties. When he was charged with this Letter, he laid hold of the inaccuracies, and urged the improbability of the accuſation; but never denied it: he ſhuffles between cowardice and vera-

city, and talks big when he ſays nothing.

He ſeemed deſirous enough of recommencing courtier, and endeavoured to gain the kindneſs of Mrs. Howard, remembering what Mrs. Maſham had performed in former times; but his flatteries were, like thoſe of the other wits, unſucceſsful; the Lady either wanted power, or had no ambition of poetical immortality.

He was ſeized not long afterwards by a fit of giddineſs, and again heard of the ſickneſs and danger of Mrs. Johnſon. He then left the houſe of Pope, as it ſeems, with very little ceremony, finding that *two ſick friends cannot live* toge-

together; and did not write to him till he found himself at Chester.

He returned to a home of sorrow; poor Stella was sinking into the grave, and, after a languishing delay of about two months, died in her forty-fourth year, on January 28, 1728. How much he wished her life, his papers tell us; nor can it be doubted that he dreaded the death of her whom he loved most, aggravated by the consciousness that himself had hastened it.

Beauty and the power of pleasing, the greatest external advantages that woman can desire or possess, were fatal to the unfortunate Stella. The man whom she had the misfortune to love was, as Delany observes, fond of singu-

larity, and desirous to make a mode of happiness for himself, out of the general course of things and order of Providence. From the time of her arrival in Ireland he seems resolved to keep her in his power, and therefore hindered a match sufficiently advantageous, by accumulating unreasonable demands, and prescribing conditions that could not be performed. While she was at her own disposal he did not consider his possession as secure; resentment, ambition, or caprice, might separate them; he was therefore resolved to make *assurance double sure*, and to appropriate her by a private marriage, to which he had annexed the expectation of all the pleasures of perfect friendship, without the

uneaſineſs of conjugal reſtraint. But with this ſtate poor Stella was not ſatiſfied; ſhe never was treated as a wife, and to the world ſhe had the appearance of a miſtreſs. She lived ſullenly on, in hope that in time he would own and receive her; but the time did not come till the change of his manners and depravation of his mind made her tell him, when he offered to acknowledge her, that *it was too late*. She then gave up herſelf to ſorrowful reſentment, and died by the tyranny of him by whom ſhe was in the higheſt degree loved and honoured.

What were her claims to this excentrick tenderneſs, by which the laws of Nature were violated to retain her, cu-

riosity will enquire; but how ſhall it be gratified? Swift was a lover; his teſtimony may be ſuſpected. Delany and the Iriſh ſaw with Swift's eyes, and therefore add little confirmation. That ſhe was virtuous, beautiful, and elegant, in a very high degree, ſuch admiration from ſuch a lover makes it very probable; but ſhe had not much literature, for ſhe could not ſpell her own language; and of her wit, ſo loudly vaunted, the ſmart ſayings which Swift has collected afford no ſplendid ſpecimen.

The reader of Swift's *Letter to a Lady on her Marriage*, may be allowed to doubt whether his opinion of female excellence ought implicitly to be admitted; for if his general thoughts on women

men were ſuch as he exhibits, a very little ſenſe in a Lady would enrapture, and a very little virtue would aſtoniſh him. Stella's ſupremacy, therefore, was perhaps only local; ſhe was great, becauſe her aſſociates were little.

In ſome Remarks lately publiſhed on the Life of Swift, this marriage is mentioned as fabulous, or doubtful; but, alas! poor Stella, as Dr. Madden told me, related her melancholy ſtory to Dr. Sheridan, when he attended her as a clergyman to prepare her for death; and Delany tells it not with doubt, but only with regret. Swift never mentioned her without a ſigh.

The reſt of his life was ſpent in Ireland, in a country to which not even

power almoſt deſpotick, nor flattery almoſt idolatrous, could reconcile him. He ſometimes wiſhed to viſit England, but always found ſome reaſon of delay. He tells Pope, in the decline of life, that he hopes once more to ſee him; *but if not*, ſays he, *we muſt part, as all human beings have parted.*

After the death of Stella, his benevolence was contracted, and his ſeverity exaſperated; he drove his acquaintance from his table, and wondered why he was deſerted. But he continued his attention to the publick, and wrote from time to time ſuch directions, admonitions, or cenſures, as the various exigency of affairs, in his opinion, made pro-

proper; and nothing fell from his pen in vain.

In a ſhort poem on the Preſbyterians, whom he always regarded with deteſtation, he beſtowed one ſtricture upon Betteſworth, a lawyer eminent for his inſolence to the clergy, which, from very conſiderable reputation, brought him into immediate and univerſal contempt. Betteſworth, enraged at his diſgrace and loſs, went to Swift, and demanded whether he was the author of that poem. "Mr. Betteſworth," anſwered he, "I was in my youth ac-
"quainted with great lawyers, who,
"knowing my diſpoſition to ſatire, ad-
"viſed me, that, if any ſcoundrel or
"blockhead whom I had lampooned
"ſhould

"ſhould aſk, *Are you the author of this* "*paper*, I ſhould tell him that I was not "the author; and therefore I tell you, "Mr. Betteſworth, that I am not the "author of theſe lines."

Betteſworth was ſo little ſatisfied with this account, that he publickly profeſſed his reſolution of a violent and corporal revenge; but the inhabitants of St. Patrick's diſtrict embodied themſelves in the Dean's defence; and Betteſworth declared in Parliament, that Swift had deprived him of twelve hundred pounds a year.

Swift was popular a while by another mode of beneficence. He ſet aſide ſome hundreds to be lent in ſmall ſums to the poor, from five ſhillings, I think,

to

to five pounds. He took no intereſt, and only required that, at repayment, a ſmall fee ſhould be given to the accomptant; but he required that the day of promiſed payment ſhould be exactly kept. A ſevere and punctilious temper is ill qualified for tranſactions with the poor; the day was often broken, and the loan was not repaid. This might have been eaſily foreſeen; but for this Swift had made no proviſion of patience or pity. He ordered his debtors to be ſued. A ſevere creditor has no popular character; what then was likely to be ſaid of him who employs the catchpoll under the appearance of charity? The clamour againſt him was loud, and the reſentment of the populace outrageous; he

was

was therefore forced to drop his ſcheme, and own the folly of expecting punctuality from the poor.

His aſperity continually increaſing, condemned him to ſolitude; and his reſentment of ſolitude ſharpened his aſperity. He was not, however, totally deſerted: ſome men of learning, and ſome women of elegance, often viſited him; and he wrote from time to time either verſe or proſe; of his verſes he willingly gave copies, and is ſuppoſed to have felt no diſcontent when he ſaw them printed. His favourite maxim was *vive la bagatelle*; he thought trifles a neceſſary part of life, and perhaps found them neceſſary to himſelf. It ſeems impoſſible to him to be idle, and his diſ-

orders

orders made it difficult or dangerous to be long ſeriouſly ſtudious, or laborioufly diligent. The love of eaſe is always gaining upon age, and he had one temptation to petty amuſements peculiar to himſelf; whatever he did, he was ſure to hear applauded; and ſuch was his predominance over all that approached, that all their applauſes were probably ſincere. He that is much flattered, ſoon learns to flatter himſelf: we are commonly taught our duty by fear or ſhame, and how can they act upon the man who hears nothing but his own praiſes?

As his years increaſed, his fits of giddineſs and deafneſs grew more frequent, and his deafneſs made converſation difficult; they grew likewiſe more ſevere,

till

till in 1736, as he was writing a poem called *The Legion Club*, he was ſeized with a fit ſo painful, and ſo long continued, that he never after thought it proper to attempt any work of thought or labour.

He was always careful of his money, and was therefore no liberal entertainer; but was leſs frugal of his wine than of his meat. When his friends of either ſex came to him, in expectation of a dinner, his cuſtom was to give every one a ſhilling, that they might pleaſe themſelves with their proviſion. At laſt his avarice grew too powerful for his kindneſs; he would refuſe a bottle of wine, and in Ireland no man viſits where he cannot drink.

Having

Having thus excluded converſation, and deſiſted from ſtudy, he had neither buſineſs nor amuſement; for having, by ſome ridiculous reſolution or mad vow, determined never to wear ſpectacles, he could make little uſe of books in his later years: his ideas, therefore, being neither renovated by diſcourſe nor increaſed by reading, wore gradually away, and left his mind vacant to the vexations of the hour, till at laſt his anger was heightened into madneſs.

He however permitted one book to be publiſhed, which had been the production of former years; *Polite Converſation*, which appeared in 1738. The *Directions for Servants* was printed ſoon after his death. Theſe two performances ſhew

ſhew a mind inceſſantly attentive, and, when it was not employed upon great things, buſy with minute occurrences. It is apparent that he muſt have had the habit of noting whatever he obſerved; for ſuch a number of particulars could never have been aſſembled by the power of recollection.

He grew more violent; and his mental powers declined till (1741) it was found neceſſary that legal guardians ſhould be appointed of his perſon and fortune. He now loſt diſtinction. His madneſs was compounded of rage and fatuity. The laſt face that he knew was that of Mrs. Whiteway, and her he ceaſed to know in a little time. His meat was brought him cut into mouthfuls;

fuls; but he would never touch it while the ſervant ſtaid, and at laſt, after it had ſtood perhaps an hour, would eat it walking; for he continued his old habit, and was on his feet ten hours a-day.

Next year (1742) he had an inflammation in his left eye, which ſwelled it to the ſize of an egg, with boils in other parts; he was kept long waking with the pain, and was not eaſily reſtrained by five attendants from tearing out his eye.

The tumour at laſt ſubſided; and a ſhort interval of reaſon enſuing, in which he knew his phyſician and his family, gave hopes of his recovery; but in a few days he ſunk into lethargick ſtupidity, motionleſs, heedleſs, and ſpeechleſs.

leſs. But it is ſaid, that, after a year of total ſilence, when his houſekeeper, on the 30th of November, told him that the uſual bonfires and illuminations were preparing to celebrate his birthday, he anſwered, *It is all folly; they had better let it alone.*

It is remembered that he afterwards ſpoke now and then, or gave ſome intimation of a meaning; but at laſt ſunk into perfect ſilence, which continued till about the end of October 1744, when, in his ſeventy-eighth year, he expired without a ſtruggle.

WHEN

WHEN Swift is conſidered as an author, it is juſt to eſtimate his powers by their effects. In the reign of Queen Anne he turned the ſtream of popularity againſt the Whigs, and muſt be confeſſed to have dictated for a time the political opinions of the Engliſh nation. In the ſucceeding reign he delivered Ireland from plunder and oppreſſion; and ſhewed that wit, confederated with truth, had ſuch force as authority was unable to reſiſt. He ſaid truly of himſelf, that Ireland *was his debtor*. It was from the time when he firſt began to patronize the Iriſh, that they may

date their riches and prosperity. He taught them first to know their own interest, their weight, and their strength, and gave them spirit to assert that equality with their fellow-subjects to which they have ever since been making vigorous advances, and to claim those rights which they have at last established. Nor can they be charged with ingratitude to their benefactor; for they reverenced him as a guardian, and obeyed him as a dictator.

In his works, he has given very different specimens both of sentiment and expression. His *Tale of a Tub* has little resemblance to his other pieces. It exhibits a vehemence and rapidity of mind, a copiousness of images, and vivacity

of diction, ſuch as he afterwards never poſſeſſed, or never exerted. It is of a mode ſo diſtinct and peculiar, that it muſt be conſidered by itſelf; what is true of that, is not true of any thing elſe which he has written.

In his other works is found an equable tenour of eaſy language, which rather trickles than flows. His delight was in ſimplicity. That he has in his works no metaphor, as has been ſaid, is not true; but his few metaphors ſeem to be received rather by neceſſity than choice. He ſtudied purity; and though perhaps all his ſtructures are not exact, yet it is not often that ſoleciſms can be found; and whoever depends on his authority may generally conclude himſelf ſafe. His ſen-

tences are never too much dilated or contracted; and it will not be eaſy to find any embarraſſment in the complication of his clauſes, any inconſequence in his connections, or abruptneſs in his tranſitions.

His ſtyle was well ſuited to his thoughts, which are never ſubtiliſed by nice diſquiſitions, decorated by ſparkling conceits, elevated by ambitious ſentences, or variegated by far-ſought learning. He pays no court to the paſſions; he excites neither ſurprize nor admiration; he always underſtands himſelf, and his reader always underſtands him: the peruſer of Swift wants little previous knowledge; it will be ſufficient that he is acquainted with common words and com-

common things; he is neither required to mount elevations, nor to explore profundities; his paſſage is always on a level, along ſolid ground, without aſperities, without obſtruction.

This eaſy and ſafe conveyance of meaning it was Swift's deſire to attain, and for having attained he certainly deſerves praiſe, though perhaps not the higheſt praiſe. For purpoſes merely didactick, when ſomething is to be told that was not known before, it is in the higheſt degree proper, but againſt that inattention by which known truths are ſuffered to lie neglected, it makes no proviſion; it inſtructs, but does not perſuade.

By his political education he was associated with the Whigs; but he deserted them when they deserted their principles, yet without running into the contrary extreme; he continued throughout his life to retain the disposition which he assigns to the *Church-of-England Man*, of thinking commonly with the Whigs of the State, and with the Tories of the Church.

He was a churchman rationally zealous; he desired the prosperity and maintained the honour of the Clergy; of the Dissenters he did not wish to infringe the toleration, but he opposed their encroachments.

Of his duty as Dean he was very observant. He managed the revenues of his

his church with exact œconomy; and it is ſaid by Delany, that more money was, under his direction, laid out in repairs than had ever been in the ſame time ſince its firſt erection. Of his choir he was eminently careful; and, though he neither loved nor underſtood muſick, took care that all the ſingers were well qualified, admitting none without the teſtimony of ſkilful judges.

In his church he reſtored the practice of weekly communion, and diſtributed the ſacramental elements in the moſt ſolemn and devout manner with his own hand. He came to church every morning, preached commonly in his turn, and attended the evening anthem, that it might not be negligently performed.

He

He read the ſervice *rather with a ſtrong nervous voice than in a graceful manner; his voice was ſharp and high-toned, rather than harmonious.*

He entered upon the clerical ſtate with hope to excel in preaching; but complained, that, from the time of his political controverſies, *he could only preach pamphlets.* This cenſure of himſelf, if judgement be made from thoſe ſermons which have been publiſhed, was unreaſonably ſevere.

The ſuſpicions of his irreligion proceeded in a great meaſure from his dread of hypocriſy; inſtead of wiſhing to ſeem better, he delighted in ſeeming worſe than he was. He went in London to early prayers, leſt he ſhould be ſeen at church;

church; he read prayers to his ſervants every morning with ſuch dexterous ſecrecy, that Dr. Delany was ſix months in his houſe before he knew it. He was not only careful to hide the good which he did, but willingly incurred the ſuſpicion of evil which he did not. He forgot what himſelf had formerly aſſerted, that hypocriſy is leſs miſchievous than open impiety. Dr. Delany, with all his zeal for his honour, has juſtly condemned this part of his character.

The perſon of Swift had not many recommendations. He had a kind of muddy complexion, which, though he waſhed himſelf with oriental ſcrupuloſity, did not look clear. He had a countenance ſour and ſevere, which he ſeldom

dom ſoftened by any appearance of gaiety. He ſtubbornly reſiſted any tendency to laughter.

To his domeſticks he was naturally rough; and a man of a rigorous temper, with that vigilance of minute attention which his works diſcover, muſt have been a maſter that few could bear. That he was diſpoſed to do his ſervants good, on important occaſions, is no great mitigation; benefaction can be but rare, and tyrannick peeviſhneſs is perpetual. He did not ſpare the ſervants of others. Once, when he dined alone with the Earl of Orrery, he ſaid, of one that waited in the room, *That man has, ſince we ſat to the table, committed fifteen faults.* What the faults were, Lord Orrery, from whom I heard

I heard the ſtory, had not been attentive enough to diſcover. My number may perhaps not be exact.

In his œconomy he practiſed a peculiar and offenſive parſimony, without diſguiſe or apology. The practice of ſaving being once neceſſary, became habitual, and grew firſt ridiculous, and at laſt deteſtable. But his avarice, though it might exclude pleaſure, was never ſuffered to encroach upon his virtue. He was frugal by inclination, but liberal by principle; and if the purpoſe to which he deſtined his little accumulations be remembered, with his diſtribution of occaſional charity, it will perhaps appear that he only liked one mode of expence better than another,

and

and ſaved only that he might have ſomething to give. He did not grow rich by injuring his ſucceſſors, but left both Laracor and the Deanery more valuable than he found them.—With all this talk of his covetouſneſs and generoſity, it ſhould be remembered that he was never rich. The revenue of his Deanery was not much more than ſeven hundred a year.

His beneficence was not graced with tenderneſs or civility; he relieved without pity, and aſſiſted without kindneſs, ſo that thoſe who were fed by him could hardly love him.

He made a rule to himſelf to give but one piece at a time, and therefore always

always ſtored his pocket with coins of different value.

Whatever he did, he ſeemed willing to do in a manner peculiar to himſelf, without ſufficiently conſidering that ſingularity, as it implies a contempt of the general practice, is a kind of defiance which juſtly provokes the hoſtility of ridicule; he therefore who indulges peculiar habits is worſe than others, if he be not better.

Of his humour, a ſtory told by Pope may afford a ſpecimen.

* "Dr. Swift has an odd, blunt way, "that is miſtaken, by ſtrangers, for ill-"nature.—'Tis ſo odd, that there's no "deſcribing it but by facts. I'll tell

* Spence.

" you one, that firſt comes into my " head. One evening, Gay and I went " to ſee him: you know how intimately " we were all acquainted. On our " coming in, " Heyday, gentlemen (ſays " the Doctor), what's the meaning of " this viſit! How came you to leave " all the great Lords, that you are ſo " fond of, to come hither to ſee a poor " Dean?"—Becauſe we would rather " ſee you than any of them.—" Ay, " any one that did not know ſo well as " I do, might believe you. But ſince " you are come, I muſt get ſome ſupper " for you, I ſuppoſe." No, Doctor, " we have ſupped already.—" Supped " already, that's impoſſible! why, 'tis " not eight o'clock yet.—That's very " ſtrange:

"ſtrange: but, if you had not ſupped,
"I muſt have got ſo nething for you.—
"Let me ſee, what ſhould I have had?
"A couple of lobſters; ay, that would
"have done very well; two ſhillings—
"tarts, a ſhilling: but you will drink
"a glaſs of wine with me, though you
"ſupped ſo much before your uſual
"time only to ſpare my pocket?"—No,
"we had rather talk with you than
"drink with you.—'But if you had
"ſupped with me, as in all reaſon you
"ought to have done, you muſt then
"have drunk with me.—A bottle of
"wine, two ſhillings—two and two is
"four, and one is five: juſt two-and-
"ſix-pence a-piece. There, Pope, there's
"half a crown for you, and there's ano-

"ther for you, Sir; for I won't ſave "any thing by you, I am determined.'— "This was all ſaid and done with his "uſual ſerioufneſs on ſuch occaſions; "and, in ſpite of every thing we could "ſay to the contrary, he actually "obliged us to take the money."

In the intercourſe of familiar life, he indulged his diſpoſition to petulance and ſarcaſm, and thought himſelf injured if the licentiouſneſs of his raillery, the freedom of his cenſures, or the petulance of his frolicks, was reſented or repreſſed. He predominated over his companions with very high aſcendency, and probably would bear none over whom he could not predominate. To give him advice was, in the ſtile of his friend

friend Delany, *to venture to ſpeak to him.* This cuſtomary ſuperiority ſoon grew too delicate for truth; and Swift, with all his penetration, allowed himſelf to be delighted with low flattery.

On all common occaſions, he habitually affects a ſtyle of arrogance, and dictates rather than perſuades. This authoritative and magiſterial language he expected to be received as his peculiar mode of jocularity; but he apparently flattered his own arrogance by an aſſumed predomination, in which he was ironical only to the reſentful, and to the ſubmiſſive ſufficiently ſerious.

He told ſtories with great felicity, and delighted in doing what he knew

himſelf to do well. He was therefore captivated by the reſpectful ſilence of a ſteady liſtener, and told the ſame tales too often.

He did not, however, claim the right of talking alone; for it was his rule, when he had ſpoken a minute, to give room by a pauſe for any other ſpeaker. Of time, on all occaſions, he was an exact computer, and knew the minutes required to every common operation.

It may be juſtly ſuppoſed that there was in his converſation, what appears ſo frequently in his Letters, an affectation of familiarity with the Great, an ambition of momentary equality ſought and enjoyed by the neglect of thoſe ceremonies which cuſtom has eſtabliſhed as the bar-

barriers between one order of ſociety and another. This tranſgreſſion of regularity was by himſelf and his admirers termed greatneſs of ſoul. But a great mind diſdains to hold any thing by courteſy, and therefore never uſurps what a lawful claimant may take away. He that encroaches on another's dignity, puts himſelf in his power; he is either repelled with helpleſs indignity, or endured by clemency and condeſcenſion.

Of Swift's general habits of thinking if his Letters can be ſuppoſed to afford any evidence, he was not a man to be either loved or envied. He ſeems to have waſted life in diſcontent, by the rage of neglected pride, and the languiſhment of unſatisfied deſire. He

is querulous and faſtidious, arrogant and malignant; he ſcarcely ſpeaks of himſelf but with indignant lamentations, or of others but with inſolent ſuperiority when he is gay, and with angry contempt when he is gloomy. From the Letters that paſs between him and Pope it might be inferred that they, with Arbuthnot and Gay, had engroſſed all the underſtanding and virtue of mankind, that their merits filled the world; or that there was no hope of more. They ſhew the age involved in darkneſs, and ſhade the picture with ſullen emulation.

When the Queen's death drove him into Ireland, he might be allowed to regret for a time the interception of his views,

views, the extinction of his hopes, and his ejection from gay ſcenes, important employment, and ſplendid friendſhips; but when time had enabled reaſon to prevail over vexation, the complaints, which at firſt were natural, became ridiculous becauſe they were uſeleſs. But querulouſneſs was now grown habitual, and he cried out when he probably had ceaſed to feel. His reiterated wailings perſuaded Bolingbroke that he was really willing to quit his deanery for an Engliſh pariſh; and Bolingbroke procured an exchange, which was rejected, and Swift ſtill retained the pleaſure of complaining.

The greateſt difficulty that occurs, in analyſing his character, is to diſcover

by what depravity of intellect he took delight in revolving ideas, from which almoſt every other mind ſhrinks with diſguſt. The ideas of pleaſure, even when criminal, may ſolicite the imagination; but what has diſeaſe, deformity, and filth, upon which the thoughts can be allured to dwell? Delany is willing to think that Swift's mind was not much tainted with this groſs corruption before his long viſit to Pope. He does not conſider how he degrades his hero, by making him at fifty-nine the pupil of turpitude, and liable to the malignant influence of an aſcendant mind. But the truth is, that Gulliver had deſcribed his *Yahoos* before the viſit, and he that had formed thoſe images had nothing filthy to learn.

I have

I have here given the character of Swift as he exhibits himself to my perception; but now let another be heard who knew him better; Dr. Delany, after long acquaintance, describes him to Lord Orrery in these terms.

"My Lord, when you consider "Swift's singular, peculiar, and most "variegated vein of wit, always rightly "intended (although not always so "rightly directed), delightful in many "instances, and salutary, even where it is "most offensive; when you consider his "strict truth, his fortitude in resisting "oppression and arbitrary power; his "fidelity in friendship, his sincere love "and zeal for religion, his uprightness "in making right resolutions, and his "steadi-

"steadiness in adhering to them; his "care of his church, its choir, its œco-"nomy, and its income; his attention "to all those that preached in his ca-"thedral, in order to their amendment "in pronunciation and style; as also "his remarkable attention to the inte-"rest of his successors, preferably to "his own present emoluments; invin-"cible patriotism, even to a country "which he did not love; his very va-"rious, well-devised, well-judged, and "extensive charities, throughout his "life, and his whole fortune (to say "nothing of his wife's) conveyed to the "same christian purposes at his death; "charities from which he could enjoy "no

"no honour, advantage, or ſatisfac-
"tion of any kind in this world.
"When you conſider his ironical and
"humorous, as well as his ſerious
"ſchemes, for the promotion of true
"religion and virtue; his ſucceſs in
"ſoliciting for the Firſt Fruits and
"Twentieths, to the unſpeakable bene-
"fit of the eſtabliſhed Church of Ire-
"land; and his felicity (to rate it no
"higher) in giving occaſion to the
"building of fifty new churches in
"London.

"All this conſidered, the character
"of his life will appear like that of his
"writings; they will both bear to be
"re-conſidered and re-examined with

"the utmoſt attention, and always diſ-
"cover new beauties and excellencies
"upon every examination.

"They will bear to be conſidered as
"the ſun, in which the brightneſs will
"hide the blemiſhes; and whenever pe-
"tulant ignorance, pride, malice, ma-
"lignity, or envy, interpoſes to cloud
"or ſully his fame, I will take upon me
"to pronounce that the eclipſe will not
"laſt long.

"To conclude—no man ever de-
"ſerved better of any country than
"Swift did of his. A ſteady, perſe-
"vering, inflexible friend; a wiſe, a
"watchful, and a faithful counſellor,
"under many ſevere trials and bitter

" perſecutions, to the manifeſt hazard
" both of his liberty and fortune.

" He lived a bleſſing, he died a be-
" nefactor, and his name will ever live
" an honour to Ireland."

IN

IN the Poetical Works of Dr. Swift there is not much upon which the critick can exercise his powers. They are often humourous, almost always light, and have the qualities which recommend such compositions, easiness and gaiety. They are, for the most part, what their author intended. The diction is correct, the numbers are smooth, and the rhymes exact. There seldom occurs a hard-laboured expression, or a redundant epithet; all his verses exemplify his own definition of a good style, they

they conſiſt of *proper words in proper places.*

To divide this Collection into claſſes, and ſhew how ſome pieces are groſs, and ſome are trifling, would be to tell the reader what he knows already, and to find faults of which the author could not be ignorant, who certainly wrote often not to his judgement, but his humour.

It was ſaid, in a Preface to one of the Iriſh editions, that Swift had never been known to take a ſingle thought from any writer, ancient or modern. This is not literally true; but perhaps no writer can eaſily be found that has borrowed ſo little, or that in all his excellencies

lencies and all his defects has so well maintained his claim to be considered as original.

4 AP 54

G A Y.

JOHN GAY, deſcended from an old family that had been long in poſſeſſion of the manour of * Goldworthy in Devonſhire, was born in 1688, at or near Barnſtaple, where he was educated by Mr. Luck, who taught the ſchool of that town with good reputation, and, a little before he retired from it, publiſhed a volume of Latin and Engliſh verſes. Under ſuch a maſter he was likely to form a taſte for poetry. Being

* *Goldworthy* does not appear in the *Villare*.

born without proſpect of hereditary riches, he was ſent to London in his youth, and placed apprentice with a ſilk mercer.

How long he continued behind the counter, or with what degree of ſoftneſs and dexterity he received and accommodated the ladies, as he probably took no delight in telling it, is not known. The report is, that he was ſoon weary of either the reſtraint or ſervility of his occupation, and eaſily perſuaded his maſter to diſcharge him.

The dutcheſs of Monmouth, remarkable for inflexible perſeverance in her demand to be treated as a princeſs, in 1712 took Gay into her ſervice as ſecretary: by quitting a ſhop for ſuch ſervice he might gain leiſure, but he certainly

tainly advanced little in the boaſt of independence. Of his leiſure he made ſo good uſe, that he publiſhed next year a poem on *Rural Sports*, and inſcribed it to Mr. Pope, who was then riſing faſt into reputation. Pope was pleaſed with the honour; and when he became acquainted with Gay found ſuch attractions in his manners and converſation, that he ſeems to have received him into his inmoſt confidence; and a friendſhip was formed between them which laſted to their ſeparation by death, without any known abatement on either part. Gay was the general favourite of the whole aſſociation of wits; but they regarded him as a play-fellow rather than

a partner, and treated him with more fondneſs than reſpect.

Next year he publiſhed *The Shepherd's Week*, ſix Engliſh Paſtorals, in which the images are drawn from real life, ſuch as it appears among the ruſticks in parts of England remote from London. Steele in ſome papers of the *Guardian* had praiſed Ambroſe Philips as the Paſtoral writer that yielded only to Theocritus, Virgil, and Spenſer. Pope, who had alſo publiſhed Paſtorals, not pleaſed to be overlooked, drew up a compariſon of his own compoſitions with thoſe of Philips, in which he covertly gave himſelf the preference, while he ſeemed to diſown it. Not content with this, he is ſuppoſed to have incited Gay to write the

the *Shepherd's Week*, to ſhew, that if it be neceſſary to copy nature with minuteneſs, rural life muſt be exhibited ſuch as groſſneſs and ignorance have made it. So far the plan was reaſonable; but the Paſtorals are introduced by a *Proeme*, written with ſuch imitation as they could attain of obſolete language, and by conſequence in a ſtile that was never ſpoken nor written in any age or in any place.

But the effect of reality and truth became conſpicuous, even when the intention was to ſhew them groveling and degraded. Theſe Paſtorals became popular, and were read with delight as juſt repreſentations of rural manners and occupations by thoſe who had no intereſt

in the rivalry of the poets, nor knowledge of the critical diſpute.

In 1713 he brought a comedy called *The Wife of Bath* upon the ſtage, but it received no applauſe; he printed it, however; and ſeventeen years after, having altered it, and, as he thought, adapted it more to the publick taſte, he offered it again to the town; but though he was fluſhed with the ſucceſs of the *Beggar's Opera*, had the mortification to ſee it again rejected.

In the laſt year of queen Anne's life, Gay was made ſecretary to the earl of Clarendon, ambaſſador to the court of Hanover. This was a ſtation that naturally gave him hopes of kindneſs from every party; but the Queen's death put

an end to her favours, and he had dedicated his *Shepherd's Week* to Bolingbroke, which Swift conſidered as the crime that obſtructed all kindneſs from the houſe of Hanover.

He did not, however, omit to improve the right which his office had given him to the notice of the royal family. On the arrival of the princeſs of Wales he wrote a poem, and obtained ſo much favour that both the Prince and Princeſs went to ſee his *What d'ye call it*, a kind of mock-tragedy, in which the images were comick, and the action grave; ſo that, as Pope relates, Mr. Cromwel, who could not hear what was ſaid, was at a loſs how to reconcile the

laughter of the audience with the ſolemnity of the ſcene.

Of this performance the value certainly is but little; but it was one of the lucky trifles that give pleaſure by novelty, and was ſo much favoured by the audience that envy appeared againſt it in the form of criticiſm; and Griffen a player, in conjunction with Mr. Theobald, a man afterwards more remarkable, produced a pamphlet called the *Key to the What d' ye call it*; which, ſays Gay, *calls me a blockhead, and Mr. Pope a knave.*

But Fortune has always been inconſtant. Not long afterwards (1717) he endeavoured to entertain the town with *Three Hours after Marriage*; a comedy written,

as

as there is sufficient reason for believing, by the joint assistance of Pope and Arbuthnot. One purpose of it was to bring into contempt Dr. Woodward the Fossilist, a man not really or justly contemptible. It had the fate which such outrages deserve: the scene in which Woodward was directly and apparently ridiculed, by the introduction of a mummy and a crocodile, disgusted the audience, and the performance was driven off the stage with general condemnation.

Gay is represented as a man easily incited to hope, and deeply depressed when his hopes were disappointed. This is not the character of a hero; but it may naturally supply something more generally

rally welcome, a ſoft and civil companion. Whoever is apt to hope good from others is diligent to pleaſe them; but he that believes his powers ſtrong enough to force their own way, commonly tries only to pleaſe himſelf.

He had been ſimple enough to imagine that thoſe who laughed at the *What d'ye call it* would raiſe the fortune of its author; and finding nothing done, ſunk into dejection. His friends endeavoured to divert him. The earl of Burlington ſent him (1716) into Devonſhire; the year after, Mr. Pulteney took him to Aix; and in the following year lord Harcourt invited him to his ſeat, where, during his viſit, the two rural lovers

were

were killed with lightning, as is particularly told in Pope's Letters.

Being now generally known, he publiſhed (1720) his Poems by ſubſcription with ſuch ſucceſs, that he raiſed a thouſand pounds; and called his friends to a conſultation, what uſe might be beſt made of it. Lewis, the ſteward of lord Oxford, adviſed him to intruſt it to the funds, and live upon the intereſt; Arbuthnot bad him intruſt it to Providence, and live upon the principal; Pope directed him, and was ſeconded by Swift, to purchaſe an annuity.

Gay in that diſaſtrous year * had a preſent from young Craggs of ſome South-ſea-ſtock, and once ſuppoſed himſelf to be maſter of twenty thouſand pounds.

* Spence.

His

His friends perſuaded him to ſell his ſhare; but he dreamed of dignity and ſplendour, and could not bear to obſtruct his own fortune. He was then importuned to ſell as much as would purchaſe an hundred a year for life, *which*, ſays Fenton, *will make you ſure of a clean ſhirt and a ſhoulder of mutton every day*. This counſel was rejected; the profit and principal were loſt, and Gay ſunk under the calamity ſo low that his life became in danger.

By the care of his friends, among whom Pope appears to have ſhewn particular tenderneſs, his health was reſtored; and, returning to his ſtudies, he wrote a tragedy called *The Captives*, which he was invited to read before the prin-

princeſs of Wales. When the hour came, he ſaw the princeſs and her ladies all in expectation, and advancing with reverence, too great for any other attention, ſtumbled at a ſtool, and falling forwards, threw down a weighty Japan ſcreen. The princeſs ſtarted, the ladies ſcreamed, and poor Gay after all the diſturbance was ſtill to read his play.

The fate of *The Captives* * I know not; but he now thought himſelf in favour, and undertook (1726) to write a volume of Fables for the improvement of the young duke of Cumberland. For this he is ſaid to have been promiſed a reward, which he had doubtleſs magnified with all the wild expectations of indigence and vanity.

* It was acted at Drury-Lane in 1723.

Next year the Prince and Princeſs became King and Queen, and Gay was to be great and happy; but upon the ſettlement of the houſehold he found himſelf appointed gentleman uſher to the princeſs Louiſa. By this offer he thought himſelf inſulted, and ſent a meſſage to the Queen, that he was too old for the place. There ſeem to have been many machinations employed afterwards in his favour, and diligent court was paid to Mrs. Howard, afterwards counteſs of Suffolk, who was much beloved by the King and Queen, to engage her intereſt for his promotion; but ſolicitations, verſes, and flatteries were thrown away; the lady heard them, and did nothing.

All

All the pain which he ſuffered from the neglect, or, as he perhaps termed it, the ingratitude of the court, may be ſuppoſed to have been driven away by the unexampled ſucceſs of the *Beggar's Opera*. This play, written in ridicule of the muſical Italian Drama, was firſt offered to Cibber and his brethren at Drury-Lane, and rejected; it being then carried to Rich, had the effect, as was ludicrouſly ſaid, of *making* Gay *rich*, and Rich *gay*.

Of this lucky piece, as the reader cannot but wiſh to know the original and progreſs, I have inſerted the relation which Spence has given in Pope's words.

" Dr.

" Dr. Swift had been obſerving once " to Mr. Gay, what an odd pretty ſort " of a thing a Newgate Paſtoral might " make. Gay was inclined to try at " ſuch a thing for ſome time; but after- " wards thought it would be better to " write a comedy on the ſame plan. " This was what gave riſe to the *Beg-* " *gar's Opera.* He began on it; and " when firſt he mentioned it to Swift, " the doctor did not much like the pro- " ject. As he carried it on, he ſhewed " what he wrote to both of us, and we " now-and-then gave a correction, or a " word or two of advice; but it was " wholly of his own writing.—When it " was done, neither of us thought it " would ſucceed.—We ſhewed it to Con-

" greve; who, after reading it over,
" ſaid, It would either take greatly, or
" be damned confoundedly.—We were
" all, at the firſt night of it, in great
" uncertainty of the event; till we were
" very much encouraged by overhear-
" ing the duke of Argyle, who ſat in
" the next box to us, ſay, " It will do—
" it muſt do! I ſee it in the eyes of
" them." This was a good while before
" the firſt Act was over, and ſo gave us
" eaſe ſoon; for that duke (beſides his
" own good taſte) has a particular
" knack, as any one now living, in diſ-
" covering the taſte of the publick. He
" was quite right in this, as uſual; the
" good nature of the audience appeared

" ſtronger and ſtronger every act, and " ended in a clamour of applauſe."

Its reception is thus recorded in the notes to the *Dunciad:*

" This piece was received with greater " applauſe than was ever known. Beſides " being acted in London ſixty-three days " without interruption, and renewed the " next ſeaſon with equal applauſe, it " ſpread into all the great towns of Eng- " land; was played in many places to " the thirtieth and fortieth time; at " Bath and Briſtol fifty, &c. It made " its progreſs into Wales, Scotland, and " Ireland, where it was performed twen- " ty-four days ſucceſſively. The ladies " carried about with them the favourite " ſongs of it in fans, and houſes were

"furniſhed with it in ſcreens. The fame "of it was not confined to the author "only. The perſon who acted Polly, "till then obſcure, became all at once "the favourite of the town; her pic-"tures were engraved, and ſold in great "numbers; her Life written, books of "letters and verſes to her publiſhed, "and pamphlets made even of her ſay-"ings and jeſts. Furthermore, it drove "out of England (for that ſeaſon) the "Italian Opera, which had carried all "before it for ten years."

Of this performance, when it was printed, the reception was different, according to the different opinion of its readers. Swift commended it for the excellence of its morality, as a piece

that *placed all kinds of vice in the ſtrongeſt and moſt odious light*; but others, and among them Dr. Herring, afterwards archbiſhop of Canterbury, cenſured it as giving encouragement not only to vice but to crimes, by making a highwayman the hero, and diſmiſſing him at laſt unpuniſhed. It has been even ſaid that after the exhibition of the *Beggar's Opera* the gangs of robbers were evidently multiplied.

Both theſe deciſions are ſurely exaggerated. The play, like many others, was plainly written only to divert, without any moral purpoſe, and is therefore not likely to do good; nor can it be conceived, without more ſpeculation than life requires or admits, to be productive

of much evil. Highwaymen and houſe-breakers ſeldom frequent the play houſe, or mingle in any elegant diverſion; nor is it poſſible for any one to imagine that he may rob with ſafety, becauſe he ſees Macheath reprieved upon the ſtage.

This objection however, or ſome other rather political than moral, obtained ſuch prevalence, that when Gay produced a ſecond part under the name of *Polly*, it was prohibited by the Lord Chamberlain; and he was forced to recompenſe his repulſe by a ſubſcription, which is ſaid to have been ſo liberally beſtowed, that what he called oppreſſion ended in profit. The * publication was ſo much favoured, that

* Spence.

though the firſt part gained him four hundred pounds, near thrice as much was the profit of the ſecond.

He received yet another recompenſe for this ſuppoſed hardſhip, in the affectionate attention of the duke and dutcheſs of Queenſbury, into whoſe houſe he was taken, and with whom he paſſed the remaining part of his life. The * duke, conſidering his want of œconomy, undertook the management of his money, and gave it to him as he wanted it. But it is ſuppoſed that the diſcountenance of the Court ſunk deep into his heart, and gave him more diſcontent than the applauſes or tenderneſs of his friends could overpower. He ſoon fell into his old

* Spence.

diſtem-

diſtemper, an habitual colick, and languiſhed, though with many intervals of eaſe and cheerfulneſs, till a violent fit at laſt ſeized him, and hurried him to the grave, as Arbuthnot reported, with more precipitance than he had ever known. He died on the fourth of December 1732, and was buried in Weſtminſter Abbey. The letter which brought an account of his death to Swift was laid by for ſome days unopened, becauſe when he received it he was impreſt with the preconception of ſome misfortune.

After his death was publiſhed a ſecond volume of Fables more political than the former. His opera of *Achilles* was acted, and the profits were given to two widow ſiſters, who inherited what he left,

as his lawful heirs; for he died without a will, though he had gathered * three thouſand pounds. There have appeared likewiſe under his name a comedy called the *Diſtreſt Wife*, and the *Rehearſal at Gotham*, a piece of humour.

The character given him by Pope † is this, that *he was a natural man, without deſign, who ſpoke what he thought, and juſt as he thought it*; and that *he was of a timid temper, and fearful of giving offence to the great*; which caution however, ſays Pope, was of no avail.

As a poet, he cannot be rated very high. He was, as I once heard a female critick remark, *of a lower order*. He had not in any great degree the *mens divinior*, the dignity of genius. Much

* Spence. † Spence.

how-

however muſt be allowed to the author of a new ſpecies of compoſition, though it be not of the higheſt kind. We owe to Gay the Ballad Opera; a mode of comedy which at firſt was ſuppoſed to delight only by its novelty, but has now by the experience of half a century been found ſo well accommodated to the diſpoſition of a popular audience, that it is likely to keep long poſſeſſion of the ſtage. Whether this new drama was the product of judgement or of luck, the praiſe of it muſt be given to the inventor; and there are many writers read with more reverence, to whom ſuch merit of originality cannot be attributed.

His firſt performance, the *Rural Sports*, is ſuch as was eaſily planned and exe-

executed; it is never contemptible, nor ever excellent. The *Fan* is one of those mythological fictions which antiquity delivers ready to the hand; but which, like other things that lie open to every one's use, are of little value. The attention naturally retires from a new tale of Venus, Diana, and Minerva.

His Fables seem to have been a favourite work; for having published one volume, he left another behind him. Of this kind of Fables, the authors do not appear to have formed any distinct or settled notion. Phædrus evidently confounds them with *Tales*, and Gay both with *Tales* and *Allegories*. A *Fable* or *Apologue*, such as is now under consideration, seems to be, in its genuine state,

ſtate, a narrative in which beings irrational, and ſometimes inanimate, *arbores loquuntur, non tantum feræ*, are, for the purpoſe of moral inſtruction, feigned to act and ſpeak with human intereſts and paſſions. To this deſcription the compoſitions of Gay do not always conform. For a Fable he gives now and then a Tale or an Allegory; and from ſome, by whatever name they may be called, it will be difficult to extract any moral principle. They are, however, told with livelineſs; the verſification is ſmooth, and the diction, though now-and-then a little conſtrained by the meaſure or the rhyme, is generally happy.

To *Trivia* may be allowed all that it claims: it is ſpritely, various, and pleaſant.

ſant. The ſubject is of that kind which Gay was by nature qualified to adorn; yet ſome of his decorations may be juſtly wiſhed away. An honeſt blackſmith might have done for Patty what is performed by Vulcan. The appearance of Cloacina is nauſeous and ſuperfluous; a ſhoeboy could have been produced by the caſual cohabitation of mere mortals. Horace's rule is broken in both caſes; there is no *dignus vindice nodus*, no difficulty that required any ſupernatural interpoſition. A patten may be made by the hammer of a mortal, and a baſtard may be dropped by a human ſtrumpet. On great occaſions, and on ſmall, the mind is repelled by uſeleſs and apparent falſehood.

Of

Of his little Poems the publick judgement ſeems to be right; they are neither much eſteemed, nor totally deſpiſed. Thoſe that pleaſe leaſt are the pieces to which *Gulliver* gave occaſion; for who can much delight in the echo of an unnatural fiction?

Dione is a counterpart to *Amynta*, and *Paſtor Fido*, and other trifles of the ſame kind, eaſily imitated, and unworthy of imitation. What the Italians call comedies from a happy concluſion, Gay calls a tragedy from a mournful event, but the ſtile of the Italians and of Gay is equally tragical. There is ſomething in the poetical *Arcadia* ſo remote from known reality and ſpeculative poſſibility, that we can never ſupport

port its repreſentation through a long work. A Paſtoral of an hundred lines may be endured; but who will hear of ſheep and goats, and myrtle bowers and purling rivulets, through five acts? Such ſcenes pleaſe Barbarians in the dawn of literature, and children in the dawn of life; but will be for the moſt part thrown away, as men grow wiſe, and nations grow learned.

BROOME.

WILLIAM BROOME was born in Cheſhire, as is ſaid, of very mean parents. Of the place of his birth, or the firſt part of his life, I have not been able to gain any intelligence. He was educated upon the foundation at Eaton, and was captain of the ſchool a whole year, without any vacancy, by which he might have obtained a ſcholarſhip at King's College. Being by this delay, ſuch as is ſaid to have happened very rarely, ſuperannua-

ted, he was ſent to St. John's College by the contributions of his friends, where he obtained a ſmall exhibition.

At his College he lived for ſome time in the ſame chamber with the well-known Ford, by whom I have formerly heard him deſcribed as a contracted ſcholar and a mere verſifyer, unacquainted with life, and unſkilful in converſation. His addiction to metre was then ſuch, that his companions familiarly called him *Poet*. When he had opportunities of mingling with mankind, he cleared himſelf, as Ford likewiſe owned, from great part of his ſcholaſtick ruſt.

He appeared early in the world as a tranſlator of the *Iliads* into proſe, in con-

conjunction with Ozel and Oldiſworth. How their ſeveral parts were diſtributed is not known. This is the tranſlation of which Ozel boaſted as ſuperior, in Toland's opinion, to that of Pope: it has long ſince vaniſhed, and is now in no danger from the criticks.

He was introduced to Mr. Pope, who was then viſiting Sir John Cotton at Madingly near Cambridge, and gained ſo much of his eſteem that he was employed, I believe, to make extracts from Euſtathius for the notes to the tranſlation of the *Iliad*; and in the volumes of poetry publiſhed by Lintot, commonly called *Pope's Miſcellanies*, many of his early pieces were inſerted.

Pope and Broome were to be yet more closely connected. When the success of the *Iliad* gave encouragement to a version of the *Odyssey*, Pope, weary of the toil, called Fenton and Broome to his assistance; and, taking only half the work upon himself, divided the other half between his partners, giving four books to Fenton, and eight to Broome. Fenton's books I have enumerated in his Life; to the lot of Broome fell the second, sixth, eighth, eleventh, twelfth, sixteenth, eighteenth, and twenty-third, together with the burthen of writing all the notes.

As this translation is a very important event in poetical history, the reader has a right to know upon what grounds I esta-

I eſtabliſh my narration. That the verſion was not wholly Pope's was always known: he had mentioned the aſſiſtance of two friends in his propoſals, and at the end of the work ſome account is given by Broome of their different parts, which however mentions only five books as written by the coadjutors; the fourth and twentieth by Fenton; the ſixth, the eleventh, and the eighteenth by himſelf; though Pope, in an advertiſement prefixed afterwards to a new volume of his works, claimed only twelve. A natural curioſity after the real conduct of ſo great an undertaking, incited me once to enquire of Dr. Warburton, who told me, in his warm language, that he thought the relation

given in the note *a lie*; but that he was not able to aſcertain the ſeveral ſhares. The intelligence which Dr. Warburton could not afford me, I obtained from Mr. Langton, to whom Mr. Spence had imparted it.

The price at which Pope purchaſed this aſſiſtance was three hundred pounds paid to Fenton, and five hundred to Broome, with as many copies as he wanted for his friends, which amounted to one hundred more. The payment made to Fenton I know but by hearſay; Broome's is very diſtinctly told by Pope, in the notes to the Dunciad.

It is evident, that, according to Pope's own eſtimate, Broome was unkindly treated. If four books could

merit three hundred pounds, eight and all the notes, equivalent at leaſt to four, had certainly a right to more than ſix.

Broome probably conſidered himſelf as injured, and there was for ſome time more than coldneſs between him and his employer. He always ſpoke of Pope as too much a lover of money, and Pope purſued him with avowed hoſtility; for he not only named him diſreſpectfully in the *Dunciad*, but quoted him more than once in the *Bathos*, as a proficient in the *Art of Sinking*; and in his enumeration of the different kinds of poets diſtinguiſhed for the profound, he reckons Broome among

among *the* Parrots *who repeat another's words in ſuch a hoarſe odd tone as makes them ſeem their own.* I have been told that they were afterwards reconciled; but I am afraid their peace was without friendſhip.

He afterwards publiſhed a Miſcellany of Poems, which is inſerted, with corrections, in this compilation.

He never roſe to very high dignity in the church. He was ſome time rector of Sturſton in Suffolk, where he married a wealthy widow; and afterwards, when the king viſited Cambridge (1728), became Doctor of Laws. He was (1733) preſented by the Crown to the rectory of *Pulham* in *Norfolk*, which

he held with *Oakley Magna* in *Suffolk*, given him by the lord Cornwallis, to whom he was chaplain, and who added the vicarage of *Eye* in *Suffolk*; he then reſigned *Pulham*, and retained the other two.

Towards the cloſe of his life he grew again poetical, and amuſed himſelf with tranſlating Odes of Anacreon, which he publiſhed in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, under the name of *Cheſter*.

He died at Bath, November 16, 1745, and was buried in the Abbey Church.

Of Broome, though it cannot be ſaid that he was a great poet, it would be unjuſt to deny that he was an excellent verſifyer; his lines are ſmooth and ſonorous, and his diction is ſelect and elegant.

gant. His rhymes are ſometimes unſuitable; in his *Melancholy* he makes *breath* rhyme to *birth* in one place, and to *earth* in another. Thoſe faults occur but ſeldom; and he had ſuch power of words and numbers as fitted him for tranſlation; but, in his original works, recollection ſeems to have been his buſineſs more than invention. His imitations are ſo apparent, that it is part of his reader's employment to recal the verſes of ſome former poet. Sometimes he copies the moſt popular writers, for he ſeems ſcarcely to endeavour at concealment; and ſometimes he picks up fragments in obſcure corners. His lines to Fenton,

Serene,

Serene, the ſting of pain thy thoughts beguile,
And make afflictions objects of a ſmile;

brought to my mind ſome lines on the death of queen Mary, written by Barnes, of whom I ſhould not have expected to find an imitator;

But thou, O Muſe, whoſe ſweet nepenthean tongue
Can charm the pangs of death with deathleſs ſong;
Canſt *ſtinging plagues* with eaſy *thoughts beguile*,
Make pains and tortures *objects of a ſmile*.

To detect his imitations were tedious and uſeleſs. What he takes he ſeldom makes

makes worſe; and he cannot be juſtly thought a mean man whom Pope choſe for an aſſociate, and whoſe co-operation was conſidered by Pope's enemies as ſo important, that he was attacked by Henley with this ludicrous diſtich:

Pope came off clean with Homer; but they ſay
Broome went before, and kindly ſwept the way.

4 AP 54

PITT.

CHRISTOPHER PITT, of whom whatever I ſhall relate, more than has been already publiſhed, I owe to the kind communication of Dr. Warton, was born in 1699 at Blandford, the ſon of a phyſician much eſteemed.

He was, in 1714, received as a ſcholar into Wincheſter College, where he was diſtinguiſhed by exerciſes of uncommon elegance; and, at his removal to New College in 1719, preſented to the electors, as the product of his private and

voluntary ſtudies, a compleat verſion of Lucan's poem, which he did not then know to have been tranſlated by Rowe.

This is an inſtance of early diligence which well deſerves to be recorded. The ſuppreſſion of ſuch a work, recommended by ſuch uncommon circumſtances, is to be regretted. It is indeed culpable, to load libraries with ſuperfluous books; but incitements to early excellence are never ſuperfluous, and from this example the danger is not great of many imitations.

When he had reſided at his College three years, he was preſented to the rectory of Pimpern in Dorſetſhire (1722), by his relation, Mr. Pitt of Stratfeildſea in Hampſhire; and, reſigning his fellowſhip, con-

continued at Oxford two years longer, till he became Maſter of Arts (1724).

He probably about this time tranſlated *Vida's Art of Poetry*, which Triſtram's elegant edition had then made popular. In this tranſlation he diſtinguiſhed himſelf, both by its general elegance, and by the ſkilful adaptation of his numbers to the images expreſſed; a beauty which Vida has with great ardour enforced and exemplified.

He then retired to his living, a place very pleaſing by its ſituation, and therefore likely to excite the imagination of a poet; where he paſſed the reſt of his life, reverenced for his virtue, and beloved for the ſoftneſs of his temper and the eaſineſs of his manners. Before

ſtrangers he had ſomething of the ſcholar's timidity or diſtruſt; but when he became familiar he was in a very high degree chearful and entertaining. His general benevolence procured general reſpect; and he paſſed a life placid and honourable, neither too great for the kindneſs of the low, nor too low for the notice of the great.

At what time he compoſed his Miſcellany, publiſhed in 1727, it is not eaſy nor neceſſary to know: thoſe which have dates appear to have been very early productions, and I have not obſerved that any riſe above mediocrity.

The ſucceſs of his *Vida* animated him to a higher undertaking; and in his thirtieth year he publiſhed a verſion

ſion of the firſt book of the Æneid. This being, I ſuppoſe, commended by his friends, he ſome time afterwards added three or four more; with an advertiſement in which he repreſents himſelf as tranſlating with great indifference, and with a progreſs of which himſelf was hardly conſcious.

At laſt, without any further contention with his modeſty, or any awe of the name of Dryden, he gave us a complete Engliſh Eneid, which I am ſorry to ſee excluded from this collection. It would have been pleaſing to have an opportunity of comparing the two beſt tranſlations that perhaps were ever produced by one nation of the ſame author.

Pitt

Pitt engaging as a rival with Dryden, naturally obſerved his failures and avoided them; and, as he wrote after Pope's Iliad, he had an example of an exact, equable, and ſplendid verſification. With theſe advantages, ſeconded by great diligence, he might ſucceſsfully labour particular paſſages, and eſcape many errors. If the two verſions are compared, perhaps the reſult would be, that Dryden leads the reader forward by his general vigour and ſprightlineſs, and Pitt often ſtops him to contemplate the excellence of a ſingle couplet; that Dryden's faults are forgotten in the hurry of delight, and that Pitt's beauties are neglected in the languor of a cold and liſtleſs peruſal; that Pitt pleaſes the criticks and Dryden

den the people; that Pitt is quoted, and Dryden read.

He did not long enjoy the reputation which this great work deſervedly conferred; for he left the world in 1748, and lies buried under a ſtone at Blandford, on which is this inſcription:

In memory of
CHR. PITT, clerk, M. A.
Very eminent
for his talents in poetry;
and yet more
for the univerſal candour of
his mind, and the primitive
ſimplicity of his manners.
He lived innocent,
and died beloved
Apr. 13, 1748,
aged 48.

4 AP 54

PARNELL.

THE Life of Dr. PARNELL is a taſk which I ſhould very willingly decline, ſince it has been lately written by Goldſmith, a man of ſuch variety of powers, and ſuch felicity of performance, that he always ſeemed to do beſt that which he was doing; a man who had the art of being minute without tedioufneſs, and general without confufion; whoſe language was copious without exuberance, exact without conſtraint, and eaſy without weakneſs.

What ſuch an author has told, who would tell again? I have made an abſtract from his larger narrative; and ſhall have this gratification from my attempt, that it gives me an opportunity of paying due tribute to the memory of a departed genius.

Τὸ γὰρ γέρας ἐξὶ θανόντων.

THOMAS PARNELL was the ſon of a commonwealthſman of the ſame name, who at the Reſtoration left Congleton in Cheſhire, where the family had been eſtabliſhed for ſeveral centuries, and, ſettling in Ireland, purchaſed an eſtate, which, with his lands in Cheſhire, deſcended to the poet, who was born at Dublin in 1679; and,

after the uſual education at a grammar-ſchool, was at the age of thirteen admitted into the College, where, in 1700, he became maſter of arts; and was the ſame year ordained a deacon, though under the canonical age, by a diſpenſation from the biſhop of Derry.

About three years afterwards he was made a prieſt; and in 1705 Dr. Aſhe, the biſhop of Clogher, conferred upon him the archdeaconry of Clogher. About the ſame time he married Mrs. Anne Minchin, an amiable lady, by whom he had two ſons who died young, and a daughter who long ſurvived him.

At the ejection of the Whigs, in the end of queen Anne's reign, Parnell was perſuaded to change his party, not with-

out much cenſure from thoſe whom he forſook, and was received by the new miniſtry as a valuable reinforcement. When the earl of Oxford was told that Dr. Parnell waited among the croud in the outer room, he went, by the perſuaſion of Swift, with his treaſurer's ſtaff in his hand, to enquire for him, and to bid him welcome; and, as may be inferred from Pope's dedication, admitted him as a favourite companion to his convivial hours, but, as it ſeems often to have happened in thoſe times to the favourites of the great, without attention to his fortune, which indeed was in no great need of improvement.

Parnell, who did not want ambition or vanity, was deſirous to make himſelf conſpi-

conſpicuous, and to ſhew how worthy he was of high preferment, as he thought himſelf qualified to become a popular preacher, he diſplayed his elocution with great ſucceſs in the pulpits of London; but the Queen's death putting an end to his expectations, abated his diligence: and Pope repreſents him as falling from that time into intemperance of wine. That in his latter life he was too much a lover of the bottle is not denied; but I have heard it imputed to a cauſe more likely to obtain forgiveneſs from mankind, the untimely death of a darling ſon; or, as others tell, the loſs of his wife, who died (1712) in the midſt of his expectations.

He

He was now to derive every future addition to his preferments from his perſonal intereſt with his private friends, and he was not long unregarded. He was warmly recommended by Swift to archbiſhop King, who gave him a prebend in 1713; and in May 1716 preſented him to the vicarage of Finglas in the dioceſe of Dublin, worth four hundred pounds a year. Such notice from ſuch a man, inclines me to believe that the vice of which he has been accuſed was not groſs, or not notorious.

But his proſperity did not laſt long. His end, whatever was its cauſe, was now approaching. He enjoyed his preferment

ferment little more than a year; for in July 1717, in his thirty-eighth year, he died at Cheſter, on his way to Ireland.

He ſeems to have been one of thoſe poets who take delight in writing. He contributed to the papers of that time, and probably publiſhed more than he owned. He left many compoſitions behind him, of which Pope ſelected thoſe which he thought beſt, and dedicated them to the earl of Oxford. Of theſe Goldſmith has given an opinion, and his criticiſm it is ſeldom ſafe to contradict. He beſtows juſt praiſe upon the *Riſe of Woman*, the *Fairy Tale*, and the *Pervigilium Veneris*; but has very properly

perly remarked, that in the *Battle of Mice and Frogs* the Greek names have not in Engliſh their original effect.

He tells us, that the *Bookworm* is borrowed from *Beza*; but he ſhould have added, with modern applications: and when he diſcovers that *Gay Bacchus* is tranſlated from *Augurellus*, he ought to have remarked, that the latter part is purely Parnell's. Another poem, *When Spring comes on*, is, he ſays, taken from the French. I would add, that the deſcription of *Barrenneſs*, in his verſes to Pope, was borrowed from *Secundus*; but lately ſearching for the paſſage which I had formerly read, I could not find it. The *Night-piece on Death* is indirectly preferred

ferred by Goldſmith to Gray's *Church-yard*; but, in my opinion, Gray has the advantage in dignity, variety, and originality of ſentiment. He obſerves that the ſtory of the *Hermit* is in *More's Dialogues* and *Howell's Letters*, and ſuppoſes it to have been originally *Arabian*.

Goldſmith has not taken any notice of the *Elegy to the old Beauty*, which is perhaps the meaneſt; nor of the *Allegory on Man*, the happieſt of Parnell's performances. The hint of the *Hymn to Contentment* I ſuſpect to have been borrowed from Cleiveland.

The general character of Parnell is not great extent of comprehenſion, of

fertility of mind. Of the little that appears ſtill leſs is his own. His praiſe muſt be derived from the eaſy ſweetneſs of his diction: in his verſes there is *more happineſs than pains*; he is ſprightly without effort, and always delights though he never raviſhes; every thing is proper, yet every thing ſeems caſual. If there is ſome appearance of elaboration in the *Hermit*, the narrative, as it is leſs airy, is leſs pleaſing. Of his other compoſitions it is impoſſible to ſay whether they are the productions of Nature, ſo excellent as not to want the help of Art, or of Art ſo refined as to reſemble Nature.

This

This criticiſm relates only to the pieces publiſhed by Pope. Of the large appendages which I find in this edition, I can only ſay that I know not whence they came, nor have ever enquired whither they are going. They ſtand upon the faith of the compilers.

4 AP 54

PHILIPS.

OF the birth or early part of the life of AMBROSE PHILIPS I have not been able to find any account. His academical education he received at St. John's College in Cambridge, where he firſt ſolicited the notice of the world by ſome Engliſh verſes, in the Collection publiſhed by the Univerſity on the death of queen Mary.

From this time how he was employed, or in what ſtation he paſſed his life, is not yet diſcovered. He muſt have pub-

liſhed his Paſtorals before the year 1708, becauſe they are evidently prior to thoſe of Pope.

He afterwards (1709) addreſſed to the univerſal patron, the duke of Dorſet, a *poetical Letter from Copenhagen*, which was publiſhed in the *Tatler*, and is by Pope in one of his firſt Letters mentioned with high praiſe, as the production of a man *who could write very nobly*.

Philips was a zealous Whig, and therefore eaſily found acceſs to Addiſon and Steele; but his ardour ſeems not to have procured him any thing more than kind words; ſince he was reduced to tranſlate the *Perſian Tales* for Tonſon, for which he was afterwards reproached, with this addition of contempt, that he worked

for

for half-a-crown. The book is divided into many ſections, for each of which if he received half-a-crown, his reward, as writers then were paid, was very liberal; but half-a-crown had a mean ſound.

He was employed in promoting the principles of his party, by epitomiſing Hacket's *Life of Archbiſhop Williams*. The original book is written with ſuch depravity of genius, ſuch mixture of the fop and pedant, as has not often appeared. The Epitome is free enough from affectation, but has little ſpirit or vigour.

In 1712 he brought upon the ſtage *The Diſtreſt Mother*, almoſt a tranſlation of Racine's *Andromaque*. Such a work

requires no uncommon powers; but the friends of Philips exerted every art to promote his intereſt. Before the appearance of the play a whole *Spectator*, none indeed of the beſt, was devoted to its praiſe; while it yet continued to be acted, another *Spectator* was written, to tell what impreſſion it made upon Sir Roger; and on the firſt night a ſelect audience, ſays Pope *, was called together to applaud it.

It was concluded with the moſt ſucceſsful Epilogue that was ever yet ſpoken on the Engliſh theatre. The three firſt nights it was recited twice; and not only continued to be demanded through the run, as it is termed, of the

* Spence.

play,

play, but whenever it is recalled to the ſtage, where by peculiar fortune, though a copy from the French, it yet keeps its place, the Epilogue is ſtill expected, and is ſtill ſpoken.

The propriety of Epilogues in general, and conſequently of this, was queſtioned by a correſpondent of the *Spectator*, whoſe Letter was undoubtedly admitted for the ſake of the Anſwer, which ſoon followed, written with much zeal and acrimony. The attack and the defence equally contributed to ſtimulate curioſity and continue attention. It may be diſcovered in the defence, that Prior's Epilogue to *Phædra* had a little excited jealouſy; and ſomething of Prior's plan

may be discovered in the performance of his rival.

Of this distinguished Epilogue the reputed author was the wretched Budgel, whom Addison used to denominate * *the man who calls me cousin*; and when he was asked how such a silly fellow could write so well, replied, *The Epilogue was quite another thing when I saw it first.* It was known in Tonson's family, and told to Garrick, that Addison was himself the author of it, and that when it had been at first printed with his name, he came early in the morning, before the copies were distributed, and ordered it to be given to Budgel, that it might add weight to the soli-

* Spence.

citation

citation which he was then making for a place.

Philips was now high in the ranks of literature. His play was applauded; his tranſlations from Sappho had been publiſhed in the *Spectator*; he was an important and diſtinguiſhed aſſociate of clubs witty and political; and nothing was wanting to his happineſs, but that he ſhould be ſure of its continuance.

The work which had procured him the firſt notice from the publick was his Six Paſtorals, which, flattering the imagination with Arcadian ſcenes, probably found many readers, and might have long paſſed as a pleaſing amuſement, had they not been unhappily too much commended.

The ruſtick Poems of Theocritus were ſo highly valued by the Greeks and Romans, that they attracted the imitation of Virgil, whoſe Eclogues ſeem to have been conſidered as precluding all attempts of the ſame kind; for no ſhepherds were taught to ſing by any ſucceeding poet, till Nemeſian and Calphurnius ventured their feeble efforts in the lower age of Latin literature.

At the revival of learning in Italy, it was ſoon diſcovered that a dialogue of imaginary ſwains might be compoſed with little difficulty; becauſe the converſation of ſhepherds excludes profound or refined ſentiment; and, for images and deſcriptions, Satyrs and Fauns, and Naiads and Dryads, were always within call;

call; and woods and meadows, and hills and rivers, ſupplied variety, which having a natural power to ſooth the mind, did not quickly cloy it.

Petrarch entertained the learned men of his age with the novelty of modern Paſtorals in Latin. Being not ignorant of Greek, and finding nothing in the word *Eclogue* of rural meaning, he ſuppoſed it to be corrupted by the copiers, and therefore called his own productions *Æglogues*, by which he meant to expreſs the talk of goatherds, though it will mean only the talk of goats. This new name was adopted by ſubſequent writers, and amongſt others by our Spenſer.

More than a century afterwards (1498) Mantuan publiſhed his *Bucolicks* with

ſuch ſucceſs, that they were ſoon dignified by Badius with a comment, and, as Scaliger complained, received into ſchools, and taught as claſſical; his complaint was vain, and the practice, however injudicious, ſpread far and continued long. Mantuan was read, at leaſt in ſome of the inferior ſchools of this kingdom, to the beginning of the preſent century. The ſpeakers of Mantuan carried their diſquiſitions beyond the country, and cenſured the corruptions of the Church; and from him Spenſer learned to employ his ſwains on topicks of controverſy.

The Italians ſoon transferred Paſtoral Poetry into their own language: Sannazaro wrote *Arcadia* in proſe and verſe; Taſſo

Taſſo and Guarini wrote *Favole Boſchereccie*, or Silvan Dramas; and all nations of Europe filled volumes with *Thyrſis* and *Damon*, and *Theſtylis* and *Phyllis*.

Philips thinks it *ſomewhat ſtrange to conceive how, in an age ſo addicted to the Muſes, paſtoral Poetry never comes to be ſo much as thought upon.* His wonder ſeems very unſeaſonable; there had never, from the time of Spenſer, wanted writers to talk occaſionally of *Arcadia* and *Strephon*; and half the book, in which he firſt tried his powers, conſiſts of dialogues on queen Mary's death, between *Tityrus* and *Corydon*, or *Mopſus* and *Menalcas*. A ſeries or book of Paſtorals, however, I know not that any one had then lately publiſhed.

Not

Not long afterwards Pope made the firſt diſplay of his powers in four Paſtorals, written in a very different form. Philips had taken Spenſer, and Pope took Virgil for his pattern. Philips endeavoured to be natural, Pope laboured to be elegant.

Philips was now favoured by Addiſon, and by Addiſon's companions, who were very willing to puſh him into reputation. The *Guardian* gave an account of Paſtoral, partly critical, and partly hiſtorical; in which, when the merit of the moderns is compared, Taſſo and Guarini are cenſured for remote thoughts and unnatural refinements; and, upon the whole, the Italians and French are all excluded from rural poetry, and the

pipe

pipe of the Paſtoral Muſe is tranſmitted by lawful inheritance from Theocritus to Virgil, from Virgil to Spenſer, and from Spenſer to Philips.

With this inauguration of Philips, his rival Pope was not much delighted; he therefore drew a compariſon of Philips's performance with his own, in which, with an unexampled and unequalled artifice of irony, though he has himſelf always the advantage, he gives the preference to Philips. The deſign of aggrandiſing himſelf he diſguiſed with ſuch dexterity, that, though Addiſon diſcovered it, Steele was deceived, and was afraid of diſpleaſing Pope by publiſhing his paper. Publiſhed however it was (*Guard.* 40), and from that time Pope and

Philips

Philips lived in a perpetual reciprocation of malevolence.

In poetical powers, of either praiſe or ſatire, there was no proportion between the combatants; but Philips, though he could not prevail by wit, hoped to hurt Pope with another weapon, and charged him, as Pope thought, with Addiſon's approbation, as diſaffected to the government.

Even with this he was not ſatisfied; for, indeed, there is no appearance that any regard was paid to his clamours. He proceeded to groſſer inſults, and hung up a rod at Button's, with which he threatened to chaſtiſe Pope, who appears to have been extremely exaſperated; for in the firſt edition of his

Let-

Letters he calls Philips *raſcal*, and in the laſt ſtill charges him with detaining in his hands the ſubſcriptions delivered to him by the Hanover Club.

I ſuppoſe it was never ſuſpected that he meant to appropriate the money; he only delayed, and with ſufficient meanneſs, the gratification of him by whoſe proſperity he was pained.

Men ſometimes ſuffer by injudicious kindneſs; Philips became ridiculous, without his own fault, by the abſurd admiration of his friends, who decorated him with honorary garlands which the firſt breath of contradiction blaſted.

When upon the ſucceſſion of the Houſe of Hanover every Whig expected to be happy, Philips ſeems to have

have obtained too little notice; he caught few drops of the golden ſhower, though he did not omit what flattery could perform. He was only made a Commiſſioner of the Lottery (1717), and, what did not much elevate his character, a Juſtice of the Peace.

The ſucceſs of his firſt play muſt naturally diſpoſe him to turn his hopes towards the ſtage: he did not however ſoon commit himſelf to the mercy of an audience, but contented himſelf with the fame already acquired, till after nine years he produced (1721) *The Briton*, a tragedy which, whatever was its reception, is now neglected; though one of the ſcenes, between *Vanoc* the Britiſh Prince and *Valens* the Roman General,

is

is confeſſed to be written with great dramatick ſkill, animated by ſpirit truly poetical.

He had not been idle, though he had been ſilent; for he exhibited another tragedy the ſame year, on the ſtory of *Humphry Duke of Glouceſter*. This tragedy is only remembered by its title.

His happieſt undertaking was of a paper called *The Freethinker*, in conjunction with aſſociates, of whom one was Dr. Boulter, who, then only miniſter of a pariſh in Southwark, was of ſo much conſequence to the government, that he was made firſt biſhop of Briſtol, and afterwards primate of Ireland, where his piety and his charity will be long honoured.

It may eaſily be imagined that what was printed under the direction of Boulter would have nothing in it indecent or licentious; its title is to be underſtood as implying only freedom from unreaſonable prejudice. It has been reprinted in volumes, but is little read; nor can impartial criticiſm recommend it as worthy of revival.

Boulter was not well qualified to write diurnal eſſays; but he knew how to practiſe the liberality of greatneſs and the fidelity of friendſhip. When he was advanced to the height of eccleſiaſtical dignity, he did not forget the companion of his labours. Knowing Philips to be ſlenderly ſupported, he took him to Ireland, as partaker of his fortune; and,

and, making him his ſecretary, added ſuch preferments as enabled him to repreſent the county of Armagh in the Iriſh Parliament.

In December 1726 he was made ſecretary to the Lord Chancellor; and in Auguſt 1733 became judge of the Prerogative Court.

After the death of his patron he continued ſome years in Ireland; but at laſt longing, as it ſeems, for his native country, he returned (1748) to London, having doubtleſs ſurvived moſt of his friends and enemies, and among them his dreaded antagoniſt Pope. He found however the duke of Newcaſtle ſtill living, and to him he dedicated his poems collected into a volume.

Having purchaſed an annuity of four hundred pounds, he now certainly hoped to paſs ſome years of life in plenty and tranquillity; but his hope deceived him: he was ſtruck with a palſy, and died June 18, 1749, in his ſeventy-eighth year.

Of his perſonal character all that I have heard is, that he was eminent for bravery and ſkill in the ſword, and that in converſation he was ſolemn and pompous. He had great ſenſibility of cenſure, if judgement may be made by a ſingle ſtory which I heard long ago from Mr. Ing, a gentleman of great eminence in Staffordſhire. "Philips," ſaid he, "was "once at table, when I aſked him, How "came thy king of Epirus to drive "oxen,

" oxen, and to ſay *I'm goaded on by love?*
" After which queſtion he never ſpoke
" again."

Of the *Diſtreſt Mother* not much is pretended to be his own, and therefore it is no ſubject of criticiſm: his other two tragedies, I believe, are not below mediocrity, nor above it. Among the Poems compriſed in this collection, the *Letter from Denmark* may be juſtly praiſed; the Paſtorals, which by the writer of the *Guardian* were ranked as one of the four genuine productions of the ruſtick Muſe, cannot ſurely be deſpicable. That they exhibit a mode of life which does not exiſt, nor ever exiſted, is not to be objected; the ſuppoſition of ſuch a ſtate is allowed to Paſtoral.

ral. In his other poems he cannot be denied the praiſe of lines ſometimes elegant; but he has ſeldom much force, or much comprehenſion. The pieces that pleaſe beſt are thoſe which, from Pope and Pope's adherents, procured him the name of *Namby Pamby*, the poems of ſhort lines, by which he paid his court to all ages and characters, from Walpole the *ſteerer of the realm* to miſs Pulteney in the nurſery: the numbers are ſmooth and ſpritely, and the diction is ſeldom faulty. They are not loaded with much thought, yet if they had been written by Addiſon they would have had admirers: little things are not valued but when they are done by thoſe who can do greater.

In

In his tranſlations from Pindar he found the art of reaching all the obſcurity of the Theban bard, however he may fall below his ſublimity; he will be allowed, if he has leſs fire, to have more ſmoke.

He has added nothing to Engliſh poetry, yet at leaſt half his book deſerves to be read: perhaps he valued moſt himſelf that part, which the critick would reject.

4 AP 54

WATTS.

THE Poems of Dr. WATTS were by my recommendation inſerted in this Collection; the readers of which are to impute to me whatever pleaſure or wearineſs they may find in the peruſal of Blackmore, Watts, Pomfret, and Yalden.

ISAAC WATTS was born July 17, 1674, at Southampton, where his father, of the ſame name, kept a boarding-ſchool for young gentlemen, though common report makes him a ſhoemaker.

He appears, from the narrative of Dr. Gibbons, to have been neither indigent nor illiterate.

Iſaac, the eldeſt of nine children, was given to books from his infancy; and began, we are told, to learn Latin when he was four years old, I ſuppoſe, at home. He was afterwards taught Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, by Mr. Pinhorne, a clergyman, maſter of the Free-ſchool at Southampton, to whom the gratitude of his ſcholar afterwards inſcribed a Latin ode.

His proficiency at ſchool was ſo conſpicuous, that a ſubſcription was propoſed for his ſupport at the Univerſity; but he declared his reſolution to take his lot with the Diſſenters. Such he

was

was as every Chriſtian Church would rejoice to have adopted.

He therefore repaired in 1690 to an academy taught by Mr. Rowe, where he had for his companions and fellow-ſtudents Mr. Hughes the poet, and Dr. Hort, afterwards archbiſhop of Tuam. Some Latin Eſſays, ſuppoſed to have been written as exerciſes at this academy, ſhew a degree of knowledge, both philoſophical and theological, ſuch as very few attain by a much longer courſe of ſtudy.

He was, as he hints in his Miſcellanies, a maker of verſes from fifteen to fifty; and in his youth he appears to have paid attention to Latin poetry. His verſes to his brother, in the *glyconick*

meaſure, written when he was ſeventeen, are remarkably eaſy and elegant. Some of his other odes are deformed by the Pindarick folly then prevailing, and are written with ſuch neglect of all metrical rules as is without example among the ancients; but his diction, though perhaps not always exactly pure, has ſuch copiouſneſs and ſplendour as ſhews that he was but at a very little diſtance from excellence.

His method of ſtudy was to impreſs the contents of his books upon his memory by abridging them, and by interleaving them to amplify one ſyſtem with ſupplements from another.

With the congregation of his tutor Mr. Rowe, who were, I believe, Inde-

pendents, he communicated in his nineteenth year.

At the age of twenty he left the academy, and ſpent two years in ſtudy and devotion at the houſe of his father, who treated him with great tenderneſs; and had the happineſs, indulged to few parents, of living to ſee his ſon eminent for literature and venerable for piety.

He was then entertained by Sir John Hartop five years, as domeſtick tutor to his ſon; and in that time particularly devoted himſelf to the ſtudy of the Holy Scriptures; and being choſen aſſiſtant to Dr. Chauncey, preached the firſt time on the birth-day that compleated his twenty-fourth year; probably conſidering that as the day of a ſecond nativity,

by which he entered on a new period of exiſtence.

In about three years he ſucceeded Dr. Chauncey; but, ſoon after his entrance on his charge, he was ſeized by a dangerous illneſs, which ſunk him to ſuch weakneſs, that the congregation thought an aſſiſtant neceſſary, and appointed Mr. Price. His health then returned gradually, and he performed his duty, till (1712) he was ſeized by a fever of ſuch violence and continuance, that, from the feebleneſs which it brought upon him, he never perfectly recovered.

This calamitous ſtate made the compaſſion of his friends neceſſary, and drew upon him the attention of Sir Tho-

mas

mas Abney, who received him into his houſe; where, with a conſtancy of friendſhip and uniformity of conduct not often to be found, he was treated for thirty-ſix years with all the kindneſs that friendſhip could prompt, and all the attention that reſpect could dictate. Sir Thomas died about eight years afterwards; but he continued with the lady and her daughters to the end of his life. The lady died about a year after him.

A coalition like this, a ſtate in which the notions of patronage and dependence were overpowered by the perception of reciprocal benefits, deſerves a particular memorial; and I will not withhold from the reader Dr. Gibbons' re-

preſentation, to which regard is to be paid as to the narrative of one who writes what he knows, and what is known likewiſe to multitudes beſides.

" Our next obſervation ſhall be made " upon that remarkably kind Provi- " dence which brought the Doctor into " Sir Thomas Abney's family, and con- " tinued him there till his death, a pe- " riod of no leſs than thirty-ſix years. " In the midſt of his ſacred labours for " the glory of God, and good of his ge- " neration, he is ſeized with a moſt vio- " lent and threatening fever, which " leaves him oppreſſed with great weak- " neſs, and puts a ſtop at leaſt to his " publick ſervices for four years. In this

" diſ-

" diſtreſſing ſeaſon, doubly ſo to his ac-
" tive and pious ſpirit, he is invited to
" Sir Thomas Abney's family, nor ever
" removes from it till he had finiſhed
" his days. Here he enjoyed the un-
" interrupted demonſtrations of the
" trueſt friendſhip. Here, without any
" care of his own, he had every thing
" which could contribute to the enjoy-
" ment of life, and favour the unwea-
" ried purſuit of his ſtudies. Here he
" dwelt in a family, which, for piety,
" order, harmony, and every virtue,
" was an houſe of God. Here he had
" the privilege of a country receſs, the
" fragrant bower, the ſpreading lawn,
" the flowery garden, and other advan-
" tages, to ſooth his mind and aid his
" reſto-

" reſtoration to health; to yield him,
" whenever he choſe them, moſt grate-
" ful intervals from his laborious ſtu-
" dies, and enable him to return to
" them with redoubled vigour and de-
" light. Had it not been for this moſt
" happy event, he might, as to out-
" ward view, have feebly, it may be
" painfully, dragged on through many
" more years of languor, and inability
" for publick ſervice, and even for pro-
" fitable ſtudy, or perhaps might have
" ſunk into his grave under the over-
" whelming load of infirmities in the
" midſt of his days; and thus the
" church and world would have been
" deprived of thoſe many excellent ſer-
" mons and works, which he drew up

" and

" and publiſhed during his long reſi-
" dence in this family. In a few years
" after his coming hither, Sir Thomas
" Abney dies; but his amiable conſort
" ſurvives, who ſhews the Doctor the
" ſame reſpect and friendſhip as before,
" and moſt happily for him and great
" numbers beſides; for, as her riches
" were great, her generoſity and muni-
" ficence were in full proportion; her
" thread of life was drawn out to a
" great age, even beyond that of the
" Doctor's; and thus this excellent
" man, through her kindneſs, and that
" of her daughter the preſent Mrs. Eli-
" zabeth Abney, who in a like degree
" eſteemed and honoured him, enjoyed
" all the benefits and felicities he expe-

" rienced at his firſt entrance into this
" family, till his days were numbered and
" finiſhed, and, like a ſhock of corn in
" its ſeaſon, he aſcended into the re-
" gions of perfect and immortal life
" and joy."

If this quotation has appeared long, let it be conſidered that it compriſes an account of ſix-and-thirty years, and thoſe the years of Dr. Watts.

From the time of his reception into this family, his life was no otherwiſe diverſified than by ſucceſſive publications. The ſeries of his works I am not able to deduce; their number, and their variety, ſhew the intenſeneſs of his induſtry, and the extent of his capacity.

He

He was one of the firſt authors that taught the Diſſenters to court attention by the graces of language. Whatever they had among them before, whether of learning or acuteneſs, was commonly obſcured and blunted by coarſeneſs and inelegance of ſtile. He ſhewed them, that zeal and purity might be expreſſed and enforced by poliſhed diction.

He continued to the end of his life the teacher of a congregation, and no reader of his works can doubt his fidelity or diligence. In the pulpit, though his low ſtature, which very little exceeded five feet, graced him with no advantages of appearance, yet the gravity and propriety of his utterance made his diſcourſes very efficacious.

I once

I once mentioned the reputation which Mr. Foſter had gained by his proper delivery to my friend Dr. Hawkeſworth, who told me, that in the art of pronunciation he was far inferior to Dr. Watts.

Such was his flow of thoughts, and ſuch his promptitude of language, that in the latter part of his life he did not precompoſe his curſory ſermons; but having adjuſted the heads, and ſketched out ſome particulars, truſted for ſucceſs to his extemporary powers.

He did not endeavour to aſſiſt his eloquence by any geſticulations; for, as no corporeal actions have any correſpondence with theological truth, he did not ſee how they could enforce it.

At

At the concluſion of weighty ſentences he gave time, by a ſhort pauſe, for the proper impreſſion.

To ſtated and publick inſtruction he added familiar viſits and perſonal application, and was careful to improve the opportunities which converſation offered of diffuſing and increaſing the influence of religion.

By his natural temper he was quick of reſentment; but, by his eſtabliſhed and habitual practice, he was gentle, modeſt, and inoffenſive. His tenderneſs appeared in his attention to children, and to the poor. To the poor, while he lived in the family of his friend, he allowed the third part of his annual revenue; and for children, he condeſcended to lay

aſide

aſide the ſcholar, the philoſopher, and the wit, to write little poems of devotion, and ſyſtems of inſtruction, adapted to their wants and capacities, from the dawn of reaſon through its gradations of advance in the morning of life. Every man, acquainted with the common principles of human action, will look with veneration on the writer who is at one time combating Locke, and at another making a catechiſm for children in their fourth year. A voluntary deſcent from the dignity of ſcience is perhaps the hardeſt leſſon that humility can teach.

As his mind was capacious, his curioſity excurſive, and his induſtry continual, his writings are very numerous, and his ſubjects various. With his theolo-

theological works I am only enough acquainted to admire the meekneſs of his oppoſition, and the mildneſs of his cenſures. It was not only in his book but in his mind that *orthodoxy* was *united* with *charity*.

Of his philoſophical pieces, his Logick has been received into the univerſities, and therefore wants no private recommendation: if he owes part of it to Le Clerc, it muſt be conſidered that no man who undertakes merely to methodiſe or illuſtrate a ſyſtem, pretends to be its author.

In his metaphyſical diſquiſitions, it was obſerved by the late learned Mr. Dyer, that he confounded the idea of *ſpace* with that of *empty ſpace*, and did

not conſider that though ſpace might be without matter, yet matter, being extended, could not be without ſpace.

Few books have been peruſed by me with greater pleaſure than his *Improvement of the Mind*, of which the radical principles may indeed be found in Locke's *Conduct of the Underſtanding*, but they are ſo expanded and ramified by Watts, as to confer upon him the merit of a work in the higheſt degree uſeful and pleaſing. Whoever has the care of inſtructing others, may be charged with deficience in his duty if this book is not recommended.

I have mentioned his treatiſes of Theology as diſtinct from his other productions; but the truth is, that whatever

ever he took in hand was, by his inceſſant ſolicitude for ſouls, converted to Theology. As piety predominated in his mind, it is diffuſed over his works: under his direction it may be truly ſaid, *Theologiæ Philoſophia ancillatur*, philoſophy is ſubſervient to evangelical inſtruction; it is difficult to read a page without learning, or at leaſt wiſhing, to be better. The attention is caught by indirect inſtruction, and he that ſat down only to reaſon is on a ſudden compelled to pray.

It was therefore with great propriety that, in 1728, he received from Edinburgh and Aberdeen an unſolicited diploma, by which he became a Doctor of Divinity. Academical honours would

have more value, if they were always beſtowed with equal judgement.

He continued many years to ſtudy and to preach, and to do good by his inſtruction and example; till at laſt the infirmities of age diſabled him from the more laborious part of his miniſterial functions, and, being no longer capable of publick duty, he offered to remit the ſalary appendant to it; but his congregation would not accept the reſignation.

By degrees his weakneſs increaſed, and at laſt confined him to his chamber and his bed; where he was worn gradually away without pain, till he expired Nov. 25, 1748, in the ſeventy-fifth year of his age.

Few

Few men have left behind ſuch purity of character, or ſuch monuments of laborious piety. He has provided inſtruction for all ages, from thoſe who are liſping their firſt leſſons, to the enlightened readers of Malbranche and Locke; he has left neither corporeal nor ſpiritual nature unexamined; he has taught the art of reaſoning, and the ſcience of the ſtars.

His character, therefore, muſt be formed from the multiplicity and diverſity of his attainments rather than from any ſingle performance; for it would not be ſafe to claim for him the higheſt rank in any ſingle denomination of literary dignity; yet perhaps there was nothing in which he would not have excelled,

celled, if he had not divided his powers to different purſuits.

As a poet, had he been only a poet, he would probably have ſtood high among the authors with whom he is now aſſociated. For his judgement was exact, and he noted beauties and faults with very nice diſcernment; his imagination, as the *Dacian Battle* proves, was vigorous and active, and the ſtores of knowledge were large by which his imagination was to be ſupplied. His ear was well-tuned, and his diction was elegant and copious. But his devotional poetry is, like that of others, unſatisfactory. The paucity of its topicks enforces perpetual repetition, and the ſanctity of the matter rejects the orna-

ments of figurative diction. It is sufficient for Watts to have done better than others what no man has done well.

His poems on other subjects seldom rise higher than might be expected from the amusements of a Man of Letters, and have different degrees of value as they are more or less laboured, or as the occasion was more or less favourable to invention.

His writes too often without regular measures, and too often in blank verse; the rhymes are not always sufficiently correspondent. He is particularly unhappy in coining names expressive of characters. His lines are commonly smooth and easy, and his thoughts always religiously pure; but who is there that, to so much piety

and

and innocence, does not wish for a greater measure of spritelineſs and vigour? But he is at leaſt one of the few poets with whom youth and ignorance may be ſafely pleaſed; and happy will be that reader whoſe mind is diſpoſed by his verſes, or his proſe, to imitate him in all but his non-conformity, to copy his benevolence to man, and his reverence to God.

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